# MARTIN VAN BUREN

# AND THE RE-ORGANIZATION OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY

# 1841-1844

BY

GORDON ELLIOTT PARKS

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

(History)

at the

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

1965

JK
2317
1841
P3
1975

# MARTIN VAN BUREN

# AND THE RE-ORGANIZATION OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY

# 1841-1844

A thesis submitted to the Graduate School of the University of Wisconsin in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

by

Gordon Elliott Parks

Degree to be awarded

January 19~~65~~

June 19—

August 19—

To Professors: Wyllie-Hesseltine

Risjord

Fishel

This thesis having been approved in respect to form and mechanical execution is referred to you for judgment upon its substantial merit.

L. A. Alberty
Dean

Approved as satisfying in substance the doctoral thesis requirement of the University of Wisconsin.

Irvin D. Wyllie (for W. D. Hesseltine deceased)
Major Professor

Norman K. Risjord

Date of Examination, Dec. 14 1964

PREFACE

This is a study of the interaction of a man, a party, and the main political issues during a transitional period of the political history of the United States. During most of the 1830's the forceful personality and great popularity of Andrew Jackson had enabled him to dominate the political scene, and especially the Democratic party. Immediately after his retirement a great economic depression compelled his party to stand together around his chosen successor, Martin Van Buren. The election of 1840 went against Van Buren and the Democrats, but the division of the Whig party between the followers of Henry Clay and John Tyler gave the Democrats a good chance to return to power in 1844. This prospect was threatened, however, by the disunity of the Democrats, who were divided by such issues as the tariff and slavery and by the rivalries of their leaders. Van Buren, who in a long career begun back in 1800 had acquired a reputation as a master of political technique, hoped to win renomination and a second presidential term by keeping the party committed to the platform which Jackson and he had given it. He was not completely successful in executing this strategy, but his rivals were even less successful in displacing him and by December, 1843, he seemed certain to be the party's nominee for 1844. Then the divisive controversies over the tariff and slavery, and a new dispute over the proposed annexation of

Texas, hit Van Buren and the party with renewed force. He failed to respond adequately, and therefore never fulfilled his ambition for a second term. But the rest of the Democrats, who for several years had been displaying more concern for the preservation of their party and of their places in it than for the fortunes of any presidential candidate, managed to preserve their party by giving it a new form of organization. This new form of organization, required by the political conditions of the 1840's, was a radical departure from the President-centered party organizations of an earlier day, in which Van Buren had learned his political techniques, and he could find no place in it. In 1844 the Democratic party was re-organized, with Martin Van Buren, and the earlier political system of which he was a relic, left out.

Much of the writing on the Democratic party and its leaders during this period has been marred by bias, both partisan and personal, and all too much of it has uncritically accepted one or more myths about the defeat of Van Buren's bid for renomination to the Presidency in 1844. Consequently, the author has felt obliged to go again over ground that has been covered frequently before. The effort has been justified, however, for a thorough examination of the voluminous manuscript materials now available for the study of this period has made possible the refutation of some of the myths and the clarification of many details.

The primary purpose of this study, however, has not been either revisionism for its own sake or the clarification of details, but the realistic interpretation of the politics of the 1840's. During this period professional politicians were

pre-eminent in American society. They had displaced the gentry of the colonial and early national periods as the virtual monopolizers of public office, and, in the absence of big business, labor and farm organizations, and the mass media of communications and entertainment, governments and the political parties which contested for control of them were the most important institutions in the country. What was more, politics was almost the only and certainly the most likely route to fame, power, and fortune for the would-be self-made man. Ambitious, opportunistic, and alert to every chance to promote their careers, the politicians of the 1840's had all the exuberance, the energy, and the crudeness of their young nation, and they enjoyed their place in the center of the stage.

Yet as individualistic, as present-minded, and as selfish as they were, the politicians were the products--and sometimes even the victims--of sweeping changes which were transforming American society. The vigorous economic growth of the country, its political and territorial expansion, and the spread of new moral and political ideals all created problems with which the politicians, however lacking in broad views or public spirit, had to deal. In the process, though quite incidentally, they created new political institutions which both reflected and affected the tendencies which were changing America.

To ignore the purely political history of this period --however petty and unreal the selfish conniving and verbal posturing of the politicians may have been--is impossible. And to treat that history merely as a contest between sections of the country, or great ideas, or economic classes, or to treat the

politicians merely as spokesmen for such, is unrealistic. In this study, an effort has been made to portray those politicians as men of real importance, whose motives were primarily personal and whose outlooks were generally quite narrow, but who were acted upon by and in turn reacted upon broad tendencies of change of which they often had little understanding but with which they, because of their pre-eminence, had more than any other group to deal.

Because of the conviction that the politicians of this period must be understood as individuals, and as individuals whose public statements usually bore only an instrumental relationship to their personal motives, a great reliance has been placed on manuscript sources. This would not have been possible but for the generous assistance of many people in and out of the historical profession. Many other students of American politics have gathered, edited, and published the papers of politicians of the 1840's, both famous and obscure. Microfilm, and the presidential papers film project of the Library of Congress especially, enable a researcher in any part of the country to utilize the immense holdings of that institution. The author's friend, John Bruce Robertson, loaned him the equipment and taught him the skills to make other films for himself; a generous grant from the Southern Fellowships Fund enabled him to spend nearly three months on a tour of libraries at which hundreds of feet of film were made, and another nine months reviewing the material thus gathered. Lastly, the author was favored by the kindness and enriched by the knowledge of the curators of manuscript materials at the following depositories: the Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis, Missouri; the Illinois

State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois; the Chicago Historical Society and the Harper Memorial Library of the University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois; the Ohio Historical Society Library, Columbus, Ohio; the Burton Historical Collection of the Detroit Public Library, Detroit, Michigan; the William L. Clements Library and the Michigan Historical Collection, Ann Arbor, Michigan; the New York State Library, Albany, New York; the New York Public Library, the New York Historical Society, and the Columbia University Libraries, New York City, New York; the Pennsylvania Historical Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin. Other valuable assistance was given by the librarians of the University of Wisconsin and the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin; the Minnesota Historical Society, Minneapolis, Minnesota; North Texas State University, Denton, Texas; Tarleton State College, Stephenville, Texas; and the University of Texas, Austin, Texas.

Professors Irvin G. Wyllie and Leon F. Litwack of the University of Wisconsin and Leslie Fischel of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin read the manuscript and offered helpful suggestions. But the author's greatest debt is to the late Professor William B. Hesseltine, who guided the work almost to its completion and whose example of diligence, honesty, and imagination inspired it.

TABLE OF CONTENTS


| | |
|---|---|
| Preface | ii |
| Chapter I, A Politician of the Old Republican School | 1 |
| Chapter II, The President, the Party, and the Panic | 35 |
| Chapter III, The Competition Begins | 56 |
| Chapter IV, Calhoun's Challenge | 80 |
| Chapter V, Van Buren and the Vacuum in the Party | 103 |
| Chapter VI, The Creaking Bandwagon | 132 |
| Chapter VII, A New Issue | 153 |
| Chapter VIII, The Re-organization of the Democratic Party | 178 |
| Chapter IX, Aftermath | 206 |
| Notes to Chapter I | 211 |
| Notes to Chapter II | 221 |
| Notes to Chapter III | 232 |
| Notes to Chapter IV | 244 |
| Notes to Chapter V | 255 |
| Notes to Chapter VI | 267 |
| Notes to Chapter VII | 276 |
| Notes to Chapter VIII | 287 |
| Notes to Chapter IX | 299 |
| Bibliography | 301 |

## CHAPTER I

## A POLITICIAN OF THE OLD REPUBLICAN SCHOOL

> " . . . we will support no man who does not come forward on the principles and in the form in which Jefferson and Madison were brought forward . . ."
> Martin Van Buren[1]

During the presidential election of 1800, one of the more remarkable, though little noticed, advocates of the election of Thomas Jefferson was a short, slight, reddish-blond youth of eighteen, who campaigned for the Republican party in Hudson county in southern New York. He was little Matty Van Buren, whose father kept a tavern at Kinderhook, and who had for several years been a clerk in the law office of Francis Silvester. Since his employer was one of the county's leading Federalists, young Van Buren was displaying an uncommon amount of boldness in campaigning for Jefferson.

He was also displaying political talents surprising for his age. And the effect on a tavern crowd, when he climbed onto a chair to speak for the Republican ticket, was all the greater because, being short and fair, he looked even younger than he was. When he finished his speech and mingled with his audience, he demonstrated that he possessed not only confidence, but a pleasing manner and a sound judgment. Those who looked closely saw in his

deepset, dark blue eyes and in the firm jaw, signs of intelligent awareness and of determination. Martin Van Buren was not a mere boy orator, but an apprentice politician of great promise.[2]

In a long and generally successful career, Van Buren fulfilled that promise. For nearly forty years he was almost continually in public office. Indeed, he held as many high state and federal offices as Thomas Jefferson, and more than any other politician in the United States in his own time or since.[3]

And yet, during that long career in high office, the real Martin Van Buren remained almost unknown. He never revealed himself, never displayed such talents or such weaknesses as did his contemporaries, Daniel Webster, Henry Clay, John C. Calhoun, Thomas Hart Benton, and Andrew Jackson, whose public reputations were substantially correct, if oversimplified, representations of their true characters. All that was seen of Van Buren was calm geniality--and success. And so people were most impressed with his political skill. They called him "the Little Magician," "the Red Fox," or "the American Talleyrand," and they used his name as a synonym for clever equivocation: vanburenism. They credited him with the establishment and direction of an almost invincible political machine which made him, they believed, the master of New York--the politics of which were supposed to be the most complicated of all because New York politicians were the most selfish and cunning--and they further believed that he had introduced New York methods into national politics. Because he showed no remarkable talents and because he never seemed to act aggressively,

they suspected that his success was due to his possession of some mysterious knowledge of the art of manipulating other men--that the charming smile and gentle good nature which he always displayed were parts of a mask behind which grinned the truly sly fox, so clever that he left no tracks.[4]

* * *

In fact, Martin Van Buren was a very simple man, but a very different one from the Little Magician of popular fancy. The core of his personality was an ambition which was both powerful and specific: to be President of the United States for two terms. He was strong-willed, as much so as Andrew Jackson, and he was capable of ruthlessness. Yet those who met him were most impressed by his mildness and affability.[5] The explanation of the seeming contradiction was that Van Buren's intelligence was the willing servant of his ambition but the absolute master of his conduct. Reason, not emotion, governed his behavior, restraining him from obstructing his own progress by the untimely indulgence of such feelings as anger, vengefulness, or despair.[6]

Van Buren had few interests other than politics and, indeed, little interest in politics beyond his own ambitions. Controversies about ideas did not appeal to him. Further, although he deserved his reputation as a skillful judge and manager of men, political management was for him always a means, rather than an end in itself. Nor did he hunger after power for its own sake. Ideas, men, and power were simply instruments to be employed in the service of his ambition.

In addition to being ambitious, charming, self-controlled, intelligent, and single-minded, Van Buren was cautious and conservative. He rarely acted in haste or in the heat of emotion; if possible he did not act at all. When he seemed to be acting, to be directing events to his own advantage, he was often only reacting--so planning his own course that associates and even opponents, whose motives he discerned, whose habits he knew, and whose actions he could therefore predict, would push him toward his goal.[7] In ideas as in conduct the Magician was careful. To the extent that he had fixed opinions on public issues, they were unoriginal and even oldfashioned; and although he would defend his principles against attack, he did not aggressively advance them. He and his close friends attributed these traits to his Dutch ancestry;[8] they also resulted from his narrow ambition and his self control. Speculative thought and crusading zeal were, it is true, incompatible with Van Buren's temperament. But it was not his temperament, so much as his judgement, that usually governed his conduct.

Van Buren was wise not to handicap himself by involvement in unnecessary controversy, for he had no advantages to waste. His origins were humble, his formal education was limited, and he had no influential relatives to aid him. Although he had a talent for argument, he rarely produced either stirring oratory or felicitous prose. He was charming in intimate situations but he did not have the magnetic personality of a Clay or the august presence of a Webster. In an age of martial heroes he never held even a militia

office. All he had were intelligence, charm, self control, and determination, but he used these talents well and, in the tradition of the self-made man, won considerable success and financial independence as a lawyer, and great success in politics prior to 1840.[9]

Van Buren was self-made in a very literal sense. There was little in his family background or formal education to prepare him for public life. But, by observing other politicians and evaluating the utility of their attitudes, manners, and conduct, he devised a technique and a style of politics. He chose, consciously and deliberately, to be the sort of politician he became.

For the observation of politicians Van Buren did have abundant opportunities as a boy and young man. His father's tavern at Kinderhook was a center of local political activity. And because Kinderhook lay near the Hudson river and between New York City and Albany, public men of state and national prominence, as well as mere village politicians, patronized the Van Buren inn. Young Martin watched them in the barroom, heard their conversation, saw how they acted and dressed.[10] The boy's political education continued after he began to study law. His first employer-instructor was Francis Silvester, a wealthy and dignified gentleman of the type that had governed New York in colonial times. Van Buren's second mentor, William P. Van Ness, practiced in New York City and was a protégé of Aaron Burr, the evil genius of the Jeffersonian Republican party. Thus the young law clerk learned both the rural, patrician politics of New York's past and the metropolitan, plebeian politics of its future. After his admission to the bar, Van Buren

returned to his home county where he served an additional four years' apprenticeship in politics before obtaining his first important office.[11]

Many another young lawyer-politician had similar experiences, but Van Buren was exceptional in being the master at the same time that he was the student in the school of practical politics. He was not passively educated; he chose what he would learn and whom he would imitate, just as a bright apprentice carpenter might, after watching the journeymen and the master, select the tools he thought best suited for a task which he had set for himself.

Blessed with an analytical mind and a good deal of caution, Van Buren made his choices--of partisan affiliation, of associates, and even of personality traits--only after careful observation and thorough deliberation. When Silvester tried to convert him to Federalism, he made a calm, polite, but determined refusal which was the result of prior thought rather than of spontaneous loyalty to the Republican creed of his father.[12] A few years later his second employer, Van Ness, asked him to support Aaron Burr in a factional contest for control of the New York Republican party. Again, having anticipated the request and having decided that support of Burr "would not under existing circumstances be expedient," Van Buren politely declined.[13] For each of these choices the young Magician was abused by men who had been his friends; but he had made them for what he considered good reasons and he held to them with calm persistence. In later life he made

y similar decisions and maintained them with the same firmness.
did he waste time and energy on regret when his judgment
ved to be wrong. As a young man he resolved to accept whatever
ell him with good grace, and to this as to his other decisions he
ered calmly and steadfastly.[14]

Thus Van Buren made himself into the kind of politician
became: by carefully observing and wisely judging the politicians
h whom he associated and by using his great self control to
pe his conduct in accordance with the lessons he learned from
observation. His political technique was a skillfully selected
lgam of the most successful methods employed by New York's
ding politicians during the period when he was mastering the
de. Yet while he was self-made, he was not original; he formed
ew combination, but it was composed of familiar materials. He
accused of inventing many devices of political management--the
ils system, the use of public funds to control the press, and
rule of strict obedience to caucus decisions, among others.
was adept in the employment of all these devices, but he did not
ent any of them.[15] Nor did he originate a single political
nciple or even draft an important piece of legislation. He
tated, selectively rather than blindly; but he did not create.

Because he was uninterested in ideas, narrowly
itious, and wise, Van Buren was flexible in both techniques and
nciples. He remained on good terms with associates and opponents
ke, and so was able to make new alliances when necessary;[16] he
dom expressed unreserved opinions and so often avoided the

embarrassment of being on what turned out to be the wrong side of a question.[17] But the same characteristics prevented him from critically examining the product of his self-creation once the work was completed, and so his techniques and principles were flexible only within rigid limits. At the times he selected them they were, in his judgment, the best suited to his needs; but, despite changing circumstances, he never thoroughly reviewed his original choices. He played the game of politics in the 1840's pretty much as he had learned it in the early 1800's, and to the day he died he professed the same Jeffersonian Republican creed he had preached in the campaign of 1800--much softened and broadened by a lack of deep conviction, but unmodified by originality of thought or by the lessons of forty years in public life.[18]

In short, Martin Van Buren was a narrow opportunist.

* * *

There was no need for Van Buren to innovate during the early part of his career; the Republican party was both strong and well organized in New York,[19] and its leaders, recognizing his talents, were eager to use and willing to reward them. Van Buren, in turn, preferred to take the safer, though slower, upward course through the existing organization rather than risk the shortcuts of insurgency or independence. So his rise to the top in New York politics was characterized by strict regularity.

He began as a member of the Republican organization in his home county, Hudson. After four years of loyal, diligent, and effective service he was rewarded with the honorable and

lucrative office of County Surrogate. This post was filled by the Council of Appointment at Albany, which controlled hundreds of local and judicial offices and was a key element in the Republican machine which then ruled New York. Van Buren's appointment to it therefore revealed that he had been noticed by politicians more important than his county leaders. He was moving up the ladder. His next promotion, after another four years, was to the New York Senate. Van Buren stood for election to the Senate at the suggestion of Lieutenant-Governor DeWitt Clinton, who was a candidate for the Presidency and wanted the clever young Surrogate in Albany to help manage his campaign. After a skirmish in the district convention and a close contest at the polls in the spring election of 1812, the Magician won his seat in the Senate.[20]

It was a presidential election year, so the legislature met in special session in November to name the state's presidential electors. When he arrived in Albany, Van Buren discovered that he had been chosen to find a solution to a dilemma faced by the Clintonians. The Lieutenant-Governor was seeking the Presidency in defiance of the Republican congressional caucus at Washington, which had renominated James Madison, and Clinton's irregularity was hurting him; it was, therefore, important that he make no alliance with the Federalists. Yet many New York Republicans were loyal to President Madison, so there appeared to be no way for Clinton to carry the New York legislature without Federalist aid.

Characteristically, Van Buren solved the problem by combining conciliation with boldness. At the Republican legislative

caucus, in which the Clinton forces had the majority, the Magician offered the Madisonians a share of the state's electors proportionate to their strength in the legislature but not nearly proportionate to their popular strength. When the Madisonians angrily rejected his offer and walked out of the caucus, Van Buren proposed and the caucus nominated a slate of electors all of whom were pledged to Clinton. In the legislature, enough Madisonians cast blank ballots, out of fear of being charged with irregularity, to allow the success of the Clintonian over the Federalist candidates.[21]

Thus Van Buren dealt with his first problem of party management at the state level: on the principles of caucus rule and regularity and by depending on the Madisonian Republicans to act as their personalities and interests suggested they would. On those principles and that technique--shaping his own conduct so as to profit by the acts of others without attempting to control them directly--he based his entire New York career. Even when, soon after this episode, he helped to depose Clinton as leader of the party in the state, he did so in a conciliatory and regular way, and without entering into any conspiracies. Sensing that the caucus would not renominate Clinton to the lieutenant-governorship, Van Buren advised him to withdraw, but Clinton refused. When the caucus met, Van Buren proposed Clinton's renomination, but once the caucus had rejected it he blandly acquiesced, while Clinton and his personal followers revolted. Thus Van Buren, against whom Clinton had no legitimate complaint, was rid of a powerful rival

without having marred his own record of regularity.[22]

With Clinton out of the party, the wily Magician soon became the leading Republican in the state. In 1815 he became Attorney-General, which gave him much prestige and extended his acquaintance with the local leaders of the party, most of whom were lawyers.[23] But it was in the legislative caucus that he played his biggest role. He had not established that body or devised the system by which it governed the party. He simply put to work, in the existing institution, talents that were ideally suited to it. His personal charm won him many friends, while his strict obedience to the caucus, even when it decided against him, deprived his enemies of any excuse to attack him. His skill in parliamentary maneuver, his understanding of men, his command over his own feelings, and his persistence all made him an able floor manager for his party in the legislature. Above all, his intelligence and boldness made him a successful tactician and therefore a respected counselor in caucus.[24]

Leadership of the caucus involved more political power than the governorship in New York, for the legislature controlled an immense patronage. Through the Council of Appointment it dispensed hundreds of offices; through the Canal Board it awarded valuable contracts for the construction and maintenance of the Erie Canal; and it had the sole power to grant charters of incorporation to banks and other enterprises--a rich source of patronage. All these favors flowed from the caucus of the majority party and its leaders.[25]

As the leader of the caucus Van Buren was not, however, a dictator. That was never his way, and in any case it was not possible. The members of the caucus were legislators, each of whom had an organization of his own and had demonstrated that, through it, he could command a majority of the voters in his district. There were powerful and talented men among them, some of whom had been in politics longer and were better known than Van Buren. Individually, none of them was his match if he had the rest behind him; but he had no direct authority over any of them and would have been insignificant without the support of a majority of them--the fate of DeWitt Clinton proved that. So Van Buren was no whip-cracker; indeed, during the years preceding his own election to the United States Senate in 1821, he kept stepping out of the way of other prominent Republicans until their forward progress left him a clear path toward his own goal. Even then the Magician was careful not to antagonize the older leaders of the party in New York; not until the middle 1820's, by which time many of the old leaders had obtained judicial offices under the new state constitution or had retired, did Van Buren install in the state executive offices the group of young men, the so-called Albany Regency, whom he had selected to look after New York affairs while he was absent in Washington.[26] Van Buren was the master mind, but never the master, of New York Republicanism.

The same was true of the Regents. They could not, anymore than Van Buren had, dictate to the caucus. Their plans, like his, were sometimes overruled; only when his career was

directly involved were they likely to be insistent. It was primarily by having no plans, no desires, no goals which were not essential to the fulfilment of Van Buren's narrow ambition that he and the Regents were able for so long to maintain and profit from alliances with so many other New York politicians.[27]

Van Buren's New York organization, if it deserved to be called an organization at all, was like a solar system: a small, dense nucleus surrounded by distant satellites which responded to its pull but were not drawn into it. Some of the outer members of the system proved, in fact, to be comets rather than planets, passing through the system but forming no permanent part of it. Other politicians who circled faithfully about Van Buren and the Regents for decades might have shown a similar independence if it had been in their interest to do so. A perceptive Virginian, upon learning that one such had not, as rumored, broken with the Magician, wryly commented: "He is one of those enemy-friends of Van Buren, who are the most subtle of politicians and win both office and hate from him without being gratified for the former or caring a rush for the latter."[28] Such was the relationship to Van Buren of many New York politicians. His famous organization was largely an illusion produced by his skill in making use of men he could not control and of institutions he had not established.

* * *

As a United States Senator, Martin Van Buren showed the same predilection for the use of existing institutions and the same lack of inventiveness which had characterized his rise to prominence in New York. But in national politics, instead of

furthering his career, these traits nearly ended it.

When Van Buren took his seat in the Senate, in December, 1821, the political system which had prevailed since the 1790's was breaking down at several points. As a force in national politics the Federalist party had ceased to exist, former Federalists were entering the Republican party, and President James Monroe was encouraging the erosion of the old party distinctions by appointing a few of the converts to public office.[29] At the same time, many Republicans were turning away from the Jeffersonian doctrines of strict construction of the Constitution and the limitation of the activities of the federal government. New economic problems and opportunities had presented themselves with the ending of the War of 1812 and the Napoleonic Wars and the crushing of Indian resistance to westward expansion; in response, some Republicans were proposing that the federal government play a major role in the encouragement and direction of American economic development--that it impose protective tariffs, improve internal transportation, and establish a national banking system.[30]

Along with the party lines and ideology of the previous generation, the Republican party's most important institution of internal government was under attack in the early 1820's. This was the congressional caucus, the assembly of all Republican members of Congress, which since the 1790's had formally named the party's presidential candidates, regularly nominating each President to a second term and then, four years later, ratifying his choice of his successor. The principal excuse for the existence of the

caucus had been the danger that, unless Republicans were united on a single candidate, the Federalists would win the Presidency. But in 1820 Monroe had been unopposed for re-election; the justification for caucus rule of the Republican party no longer existed. Consequently, several Republican aspirants to succeed Monroe refused to submit their candidacies to the decision of the caucus, and their attacks on it as a corrupt and undemocratic institution were winning popular support.[31]

Another cause of weakness in the national government of the Republican party arose out of the growth of the country. Both the Federalist and Republican parties had been organized at the national capital, for the purpose of controlling the Presidency and Congress, and had then been extended down into the states; they had been national parties, arising out of national issues, contesting for control of national power, organized around the President and the congressional caucus. But since their formation the number of states had increased and, more important, many states were following the example of New York by launching internal improvement programs based on state credit and chartering numerous banks. So, at the same time that the number of state organizations in the party increased, state politicians, eager to control the enlarged patronage and to shape the policies of their state governments, and faced by bitter competition for these local prizes, acquired bases of power and interests which were independent of and even antagonistic to those of national party leaders. Party organization became federalized: state organizations were stronger

than the national party, which was divided by the rivalries of the presidential candidates and which controlled a relatively smaller share than before of the power and patronage.

Despite this general assault upon the party lines, the party creed, and the party government of the past, the new Senator from New York made himself the most prominent defender of all three. By bitterly attacking Monroe's appointment of an ex-Federalist as postmaster at Albany, Van Buren won national notoriety as the guardian of the purity of the Republican party against adulteration by Federalists. Against any departure from traditional Jeffersonian principles Van Buren also spoke out. He was less precise in his definition than vehement in his defense of those principles, and his votes did not always square with his speeches, but he made it clear that, whatever Jeffersonian principles were, he wanted to be known as their advocate. Lastly, he stubbornly insisted on continuing the practice of caucus nominations and he became the chief manager of the campaign of William H. Crawford, the presidential candidate of the "Radical," or orthodox, pro-caucus Republicans.[32]

In taking these positions Van Buren was not simply expressing his basic conservatism. His technique, as much as or more than his temperament, led him to bind himself to the past: it was because he planned to make use of the Republican party, its ideals, and its organization that he defended them against innovation. As a strict constructionist Thomas Jefferson had been nominated to the Presidency by the Republican congressional

aucus and had been twice elected to the office. He had chosen ames Madison as his successor, who had been similarly nominated, lected, and re-elected on the same platform. After Madison and in he same manner had come Monroe. Crawford was to be next, Van uren had decided, and then himself. Accustomed to working hrough the existing organization and seeing himself only eight ears away from his goal, the Little Magician was appalled and ngered by the political tendencies of Monroe's second term.

Unfortunately for Van Buren, the rules of the game ere changing and he was unprepared for the new style of play. All e could do was stubbornly persist in the tactics which had worked efore but which now ingloriously failed. The caucus met and duly ominated Crawford, but only sixty-eight out of two hundred and ixty-one congressmen took part in it. For Vice President the ittle band named Albert Gallatin, a distinguished Pennsylvanian ho had served in Jefferson's and Madison's cabinets; but his omination aroused so little enthusiasm that Van Buren had to ask im to decline it. Meanwhile, Crawford had suffered a crippling troke. For weeks he was so incapacitated that his condition had o be kept a secret.[33] And in New York there was a rebellion, led y DeWitt Clinton, against the refusal of the Regency Republicans o allow the people, rather than the legislature, to choose the residential electors.[34]

In the election of November, 1824, the voters of New ork gave Van Buren and the Regency a stunning defeat and, although he legislature did choose the electors, only a handful of those

ɛcted were for Crawford.[35] Nationally, the caucus candidate a poor third to Andrew Jackson and John Quincy Adams. In the se of Representatives, which had to decide the contest because candidate got a majority in the Electoral College, Van Buren led again. His effort to deadlock the House in order to gain gaining power was thwarted and Adams was elected on the first lot.[36]

Van Buren's frustration was complete. His organiza- n had lost its hold on New York. The Republican party, on the servation of which he had staked his hopes for the Presidency, shattered. The caucus had been condemned by the sovereign ple. And the Presidency was in the hands of Adams who, with ally Henry Clay, was prepared to turn sharply away from the Jeffersonian principles.

* * *

In responding to this catastrophe, Van Buren showed best traits. He did not lose his head or waste time on regret; tead he calmly, rationally, and with his famous good humor set ut reconstructing his political position. What was more, he onstrated once more his fundamental lack of originality by loying in the reconstruction as many of the old materials as he ld salvage from the wreck. His plan to follow Crawford into the te House had failed, but his new plan to reach the Presidency very much like it.

He began where he had before, in New York. The ency abandoned its opposition to the choice of presidential

electors by the people. The Magician made a tour of the state to meet with and invigorate local leaders of the party. And Edwin Croswell, editor of the Albany Argus, the recognized leader of the Republican press in New York, carefully avoided any discussion of national issues which might divide the organization. The result was that Van Buren's friends regained control of the legislature in the election of 1825.[37]

Clinton remained in office as Governor, but he and some of his allies unwittingly helped Van Buren to destroy his influence. First Clinton, who was an admirer of Andrew Jackson, spurned President Adams's invitation to ally himself with the administration at Washington. Then Van Buren interposed another obstacle to any Clinton-Adams alliance by having the Regency nominate a friend of Henry Clay's as Clinton's rival for the Governorship in 1827. As the Magician had predicted they would, the New York Adams men deserted Clinton; he was still re-elected, but the coalition he had formed to defeat Van Buren and the Regency in 1824 was permanently disrupted. The possibility that Clinton might regain influence by means of his connection with Jackson was eliminated by his sudden death in February, 1828.[38]

By then Van Buren had turned his attention from New York, where things were once more under control, to national politics; he was ready to execute his new plan to gain the Presidency. That plan was to revive the old Republican party with Jackson as its presidential candidate. Van Buren had begun during the first session of Congress under President Adams by joining

Vice President John C. Calhoun and Jackson's supporters in an attack on President Adams's policies. Shortly before the end of the session he had suggested to Calhoun that the alliance be cemented by the establishment at Washington of a newspaper to speak for all the opponents of the Administration, and that this paper be edited by Thomas Ritchie, a leading Virginia Crawford Radical, who had been editor of the Richmond Enquirer since 1804, when Thomas Jefferson had selected him for the post. Calhoun, whose friend Duff Green already edited a paper at Washington, spurned the proposal, but Van Buren did not give up. When Congress next met he had a new idea: the nomination of Jackson to the Presidency either by a congressional caucus or by a national convention. Calhoun agreed to hold a convention, and Van Buren then opened negotiations with Ritchie to bring the Southern Radicals into the scheme. Ritchie had opposed Jackson in 1824, but he was persuaded by Van Buren's arguments that slavery and other sectional issues would be the basis of party divisions unless oldfashioned Republicanism was revived, and that the best way to revive it was to connect Jackson's personal popularity with the surviving remnant of the old party loyalty.[39]

As it turned out, no convention met to nominate Jackson. His friends generally saw no necessity for it; their main electioneering argument was that Jackson had been chosen President by the people but had been cheated out of the office by a "corrupt bargain" between Adams and Clay--so Jackson was the choice of the people and the personal representative of their

right to rule, and no nomination could be more authoritative than that.[40] Van Buren, who was more inclined to shape his course to fit events than to try to control events for his own benefit, decided to go ahead with the formation of the new party even though it could not be at once committed to Jeffersonian principles or subjected to the government of an institution similar to the old congressional caucus. Despite its lack of these virtues, the new party might still help Van Buren enter the White House on the shoulders of a popular predecessor, as Madison had done.

So, during the Spring of 1827, the Magician travelled through the South, persuading the Radicals and even Crawford himself to support Jackson. Croswell's Albany Argus and Ritchie's Enquirer had both announced for Jackson before the trip was over. When Congress next met, in December, 1827, the anti-Administration coalition was in control of both houses; a Crawford Radical won the Speakership of the House while Calhoun's friend Green obtained the printing of the Senate. Back in New York the Regents were persuading the legislative caucus to nominate Jackson, as caucuses and conventions in many other states were doing. About the same time, James A. Hamilton, a friend of both Van Buren and Jackson, visited the candidate in Tennessee to assure him that the Magician was his best friend in New York and was not, as his enemies charged, "cunning," but merely "sagacious."[42]

After the election of 1824 Van Buren had been, in his own words, a "thoroughly broken-down politician;"[43] in the election of 1828 he won the Governorship of New York, Jackson got most of

the state's electoral votes, and, with Clinton out of the way, Van Buren could claim credit for the victory and a seat in Jackson's Cabinet as his reward.[44] And yet, so little had he altered his basic political position and tactics, in transforming himself from a defeated Republican into a victorious Democrat, that he was quite justified in continuing to call himself a Republican. Some observers of the election of 1828 thought it was a political revolution. From Van Buren's point of view it was more nearly a restoration.

* * *

The full proof of Van Buren's stubborn consistency, of his persistence in outdated political methods,was, however, still to come, for he had not yet achieved the Presidency. He reached that goal in 1836; and, as a conclusive proof of his preference for the old political order, he did so in substantially the same manner as Madison had, as Monroe had, as he had thought Crawford should, and as he had planned to do after Crawford: as a loyal member of the organization, as the designated successor of an incumbent President, and as the nominee of an assembly--a national convention this time, rather than a congressional caucus--which claimed an exclusive right to make presidential nominations for the party.

Some of his critics misunderstood the manner in which Van Buren accomplished this feat. They said Jackson was a foolish and senile old man of whom the wily Red Fox had made a dupe. Exaggerating the usefulness of the presidential appointive power

as a means of party discipline and misrepresenting the extent to which the spoils system was introduced into the federal government by the Jackson Administration, they charged that Van Buren had used Jackson's appointive power to recruit a personal organization extending into every state in the Union, and that through this organization he had controlled the Democratic national convention of 1835 which nominated him to the Presidency.[45] The truth was that Van Buren seldom tried to influence Jackson, that he paid little attention to the tasks of political organization, and that it was Jackson, not Van Buren, who by means of his great popularity, rather than by the art of political management, commanded the party and delivered its presidential nomination to the Magician.

Even before Jackson's inauguration, Van Buren adopted the policy of making as few demands on him as possible. He would not even press for his own appointment to the Cabinet; when his aide, James A. Hamilton, offered to speak to Jackson's close friends about it, the Magician wisely replied that if he had to ask for that which was his rightful due, he had better not enter the Administration at all. Jackson voluntarily gave him the first place in the Cabinet, the office of Secretary of State.[46]

Van Buren was content, but his many friends were not. The Virginia Radicals were unhappy because none of them was named to the Cabinet, and others of the old Crawford men were angry because their faction at first got so few of the prestigious diplomatic appointments. Despite their complaints and his duty, as leader of the faction, to aid them, the Magician did not resign

as Governor of New York and go to Washington to accept his new post until the initial distribution of the patronage was well under way. James A. Hamilton, who was Acting Secretary of State, spoke for the Radicals, but Van Buren avoided personal involvement in the squabble over the spoils.[47]

After his arrival in Washington Van Buren did take a hand in the distribution of the more important diplomatic assignments, but he still did not do enough to satisfy his friends. When Jackson insisted, over Van Buren's polite objections, on giving some high offices in New York to Clintonians who had supported him but who had always opposed the Regency, some of Van Buren's friends were outraged. One of them even threatened that unless the Magician publicly denounced these appointments, he would be held responsible for them. Van Buren's reply, calm but firm, made it clear that he would not sacrifice his association with Jackson for the sake of his old friends in New York. All he would do to placate his critics was to get a letter from Jackson stating that Van Buren had been overruled in the disputed cases.[48]

Van Buren was successful in pleasing the President. Jackson was sick when he began his first term and was still grieving the recent death of his wife; he had been almost exhausted by the task of selecting his Cabinet from among the ambitious and often antagonistic leaders of the party, had found the distribution of the lesser offices an even greater burden, and had been subjected to a great deal of abuse by his opponents and almost as much criticism from his copartisans because of the choices he had made.

The arrival in Washington of Van Buren, who had asked almost nothing, warmed his heart, and the Magician's conduct during the months which followed won Jackson's complete approval. By the end of 1829 the President had decided that Van Buren must be his successor.[49]

Even after Jackson had committed himself, the Magician did not exercise a controlling influence over appointments. Jackson continued to remove officeholders and appoint new ones throughout his two terms, but when Van Buren became President there were still many men in office who were unfriendly to him. For this reason, among others, Van Buren removed a number of officials who had been appointed by Jackson. That he did so showed that he had not abandoned the practice of limiting his patronage to his friends; that he had to do so showed that Jackson's patronage had not been his. It might have been if he had tried to control it, but he had seen a less aggressive way to obtain the Presidency: to ingratiate himself with and depend upon Jackson.[50]

* * *

Van Buren made little more effort to control Jackson's policies than to dictate his appointments. Instead he repeatedly followed Jackson's lead on the issues with which the President dealt, and sometimes he did so despite misgivings about the correctness or the expediency of Jackson's course.

The Magician did play a major role in persuading Jackson to adopt the view of the Crawford Radicals that federal appropriations for internal transportation could not constitutionally

be made except under very special circumstances, but he certainly did not dictate Jackson's decision. His principal contribution to the veto of the Maysville Road Bill, in which Jackson revealed his opposition to internal improvement appropriations, was to help the President find an excuse for the veto which would not contradict his earlier support of such appropriations. Furthermore, Van Buren was not fully satisfied with the veto message, for Jackson used sweeping language which might have been applied to appropriations for the improvement of ocean harbors. Van Buren quietly sought an opinion from ex-President Madison which would set things right, but he did not, like some less discreet Democrats, lecture Jackson on the Constitution or threaten him with unpopularity because of the veto.[51]

Van Buren thoroughly disapproved of the interpretation of the Constitution on which Jackson's famous proclamation against nullification was based; yet, instead of criticizing the proclamation he sought to placate other Democrats, especially former Radicals, who were appalled by Jackson's adoption of John Marshall's theories about the origin of the Union and the relationship of the states to the federal government. At the same time Van Buren worked for a peaceful resolution of the dispute between South Carolina and the United States. When Jackson talked of using force to crush the nullifiers, Van Buren mixed a judicious bit of flattery into his cautions against impetuosity. He also seconded Jackson's call for a reduction of the tariff--although he had had more than anyone else to do with the drafting and passage of the

high tariff of 1828 which had provoked the nullification crisis and although a large part of his New York supporters were protectionists. Thus Van Buren risked a dispute with the southern Radicals on constitutional theory and with New York Democrats on the practical question of how high tariff rates should be, and all to stand with Jackson on the whole issue. He never showed more clearly his determination to depend on the popular President, rather than on any political organization of his own or anyone else's creation, to fulfill his ambitions.[52]

In the other great conflict of Jackson's Presidency, his war upon the Bank of the United States, Van Buren was similarly submissive. There is no clear evidence that the Magician either approved or opposed Jackson's early efforts to amend the Bank's charter; but when Jackson's opponents passed a bill to recharter the Bank almost without change, and Jackson met their challenge with a veto, Van Buren supported his chief.[53] He was less firm when Jackson proposed to carry his war upon the Bank further, by withdrawing from it the federal funds which Congress had entrusted to it. The President asked Van Buren's advice about the move, but he, alarmed at the idea, delayed replying until he could consult his closest friends in New York. While he hesitated, Jackson withdrew the deposits. The Magician thereafter defended the policy he had been afraid to advise.[54]

On the issues which arose out of the Bank War--how to regulate the state banks in which Jackson had the federal funds deposited, and whether Jackson ought to have issued the controver-

sial Specie Circular in 1836--Van Buren again supported Jackson, although his policies endangered the unity of the Democratic party and, therefore, Van Buren's own election to the Presidency.[55]

Back in 1827-1828, Van Buren had hoped to place Jackson and the Democratic party on the old Jeffersonian Republican platform. The net result of Jackson's actions--against federal aid for internal transportation, for reduction of the tariff but against the state rights theories on which nullification was based, against the Bank of the United States but also against the inflation of the currency by uncontrolled state banks--placed the Democratic party on a platform which, at least in comparison to that of the opposition, looked Jeffersonian. But this was not due to any manipulation of Jackson by Van Buren. He had not won Jackson over to his views by dominating or persuading him. He had instead won Jackson's endorsement for the Presidency by publicly supporting Jackson's policies, which happily coincided with the rather vague Republicanism Van Buren had always professed.

The Magician had not given up his preference for the tried and true. But he had had to choose between the strict maintenance of the organizational form and the principles of the old Republican party and the chance of getting elected President in the old Republican way--with the incumbent's support. Since he was more interested in being President than in either political ideas or political organizations, he made himself Jackson's echo and favorite and became, as an accidental consequence, more clearly identified than before with definite principles and policies.

* * *

While Jackson did not restrict his patronage to those Democrats who favored Van Buren's nomination to succeed him, and while Van Buren did not set Jackson's policies, the effect of the events of Jackson's Administration was to reduce the Democratic party to those who were willing, if not eager, to let Van Buren be Jackson's successor. Democrats who opposed Jackson's policies or who were dissatisfied with his distribution of the federal offices sometimes left the party and began attacking him, his policies, and, above all, his chosen successor. At the same time, Democrats who were absolutely unwilling to accept Van Buren were obliged to take the same course, for they could not consistently support Jackson and his policies while opposing Van Buren, who supported them as faithfully as anyone. And the Whigs, aware of Jackson's popularity and Van Buren's lack of it, concentrated their attacks on the Magician, so that Democrats could not easily defend themselves without defending him, or defend him without emphasizing his close association with Jackson. Thus Jackson from within the party and the apostates and opposition from without it drove Democrats toward the same point: identification of Van Buren with Jackson and Jackson's policies and defense, however reluctant, of Van Buren's presidential candidacy.[56]

To this combination of pressures operating in Van Buren's favor was added the positive effect of Jackson's great personal popularity, to the strength of which both friends and enemies attributed the success of his party.[57] It would have been

utterly uncharacteristic of Van Buren to meddle with such a situation--to act himself when others were acting so effectively for him, or to borrow trouble by exerting any additional force on Democrats who were already being compelled to support him.

The passivity with which the Magician conducted himself was particularly evident in the contest over the choice of his running mate by the Democratic national convention of 1835. Colonel Richard M. Johnson of Kentucky, who finally got the nomination, was a genial eccentric who was credited with having killed the great Indian chieftan, Tecumseh, during the War of 1812. He had abandoned Henry Clay to support Jackson, but had never abandoned Clay's principles. He had won some popularity among workingmen in the East by seeking the abolition of imprisonment for debt and by blocking an effort of clergymen to prohibit the delivery of mail on Sunday. His business dealings, mostly with the federal and state governments, show him to have been greedy if not actually corrupt. He offended Southerners and many Northerners too by openly living with one of his slaves, whom he treated as his wife. In 1833-1834 he had briefly been the center of a movement to block Van Buren's nomination as Jackson's successor.[58] In short, he was hardly the candidate Van Buren would have chosen to associate himself with if he had been free to select his own running mate.

Moreover, the most prominent of Johnson's rivals was a Crawford Radical from Virginia, Senator William C. Rives, who was being groomed by Thomas Ritchie and the Richmond Junto, the bosses of the Democratic party in Virginia, to succeed Van Buren

as President. The Virginians, who were sensitive about their failure to win high national office since Monroe's retirement, were so angry at Johnson's nomination that they refused to accept it and withheld their state's electoral votes from him.[59] Meanwhile, Rives had led the opposition to Jackson's plan for regulating the state banks which were federal depositories and had joined with the Whigs to pass the Deposit Act of 1835, which both Jackson and Van Buren opposed.[60] The strength of the ticket in Virginia would have been increased and Van Buren might have avoided the embarrassment of having his party divided on a main issue during an election year if Rives had been nominated, but the Magician had not felt justified in intervening in the contest over the vice presidential nomination. The New York delegates to the convention voted for Johnson because his popularity in the West would help elect Van Buren.[61]

Another Democratic Senator who was spoken of as the President after the next was Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri, and he was so openly critical of Rives's conduct that the unity of the party was seriously jeopardized only a few months before the election of 1836. Van Buren, though injured and embarrassed by the rivalries and quarrels of his copartisans, was unable to control them; he had to be content with conducting himself so as to be as little harmed by them as possible. On the controversial Deposit Act, for example, Van Buren's public comments were so equivocal that Rives congratulated him for poising "the considerations for and against it in a balance so nearly even as to leave

no reasonable grounds of complaint to either section of your friends . . ."[62]

Van Buren was not riding to victory on a smoothly functioning political machine; he was barely managing to stay afloat in a very fluid situation. It was not his organizational ability but Jackson's popularity which was holding the party together. It was not his control over either Jackson or the party, but Jackson's decision, which gave him the Presidency. Democrats who opposed either Jackson's policies or Van Buren's nomination, but who were too wise openly to break with the party, grudgingly accepted Van Buren as their candidate in 1836 while maneuvering for the succession to him in a manner which endangered his election. His response, in keeping with his decision to depend upon Jackson to make him President, was defensive, even passive.

Rarely if ever seeing Van Buren's hand move, many of his enemies and some of his friends believed that it moved a great deal when no one was looking, and that it grasped wires at the ends of which danced an army of puppets--including even Andrew Jackson. But those who so envisioned the Little Magician were nowhere so near the truth as others of his critics, who pictured the wily Red Fox riding into the White House on Jackson's shoulders, as Madison had on Jefferson's, or who compared the Democratic national convention of 1835 to the infamous congressional caucus of an earlier day.[63]

* * *

Van Buren had survived the defeat of 1824 and the

collapse of the Republican party, and had succeeded in his plan to win the Presidency as Jackson's successor, primarily because, although unimaginative and even inflexible in his basic strategy, he rarely allowed anything but expediency to determine his tactics. He was so centered on his presidential ambitions that he did not stop to ask why his support of Crawford and the caucus had been so disastrous, what the new situation of the country after the War of 1812 was doing to politics, how Jackson had been able to act as a center of political gravity despite the centrifugal forces which had destroyed the old political system, or whether the political methods he had learned during his apprenticeship under the old system were still dependable. But the same narrow ambition which diverted him from such speculations also disposed him to be quite openminded in making the series of tactical decisions which took him into the Democratic party, which placed him at the side of Jackson in every conflict into which he plunged, and which saved him from making any of the many possible errors which might have cost him the Presidency.

Van Buren's opportunism would, of course, have been of little value to him if he had not been a brilliant judge of men and if he had not had such complete control of himself. And these traits would not have served him so well if circumstances had placed him elsewhere than in Washington during most of the period from 1824 to 1837; for Van Buren's technique--his careful management of himself in order to benefit from what he sensed other men would do--required that he be in the midst of the action, in

contact with both friends and enemies.

Lastly, Van Buren had the good fortune to have a Jackson on whom to depend. That was essential to his plan to reach the Presidency through the aid of his predecessor, for Jackson was the last President for many decades who was able to name his successor. With Jackson's retirement the political influence of the Presidency--already in decline during the administrations of Monroe and the second Adams--was suddenly reduced almost to nothing, and the route which Madison and Monroe had taken to the White House, which Van Buren had hoped to see Crawford take, and which he had taken himself, was abruptly closed.

Van Buren's association with Jackson had disadvantages too, however. His humble dependence on Jackson had required him to suspend for eight years the exercise of his talent for political management. He was the nominee of the Democratic party in 1836, but he was not its leader, and there were strong and ambitious men in the party who, having been compelled by Jackson's overmastering popularity to defer to Van Buren, were impatient to contest with him and with one another for mastery of the party and the succession to him.

And that was only part of the price Van Buren had to pay, to obtain the Presidency in the old Republican manner.

## CHAPTER II

## THE PRESIDENT, THE PARTY, AND THE PANIC

> " . . . no man is more anxious and ready than I am to continue the contest with the banks . . . until they shall cease to be political institutions and be made faithfully to serve the wants of trade and commerce."
>
> Silas Wright
> June 4, 1837[1]

Martin Van Buren won the Presidency in 1836 in substantially the old Republican manner, with the support of a party generally committed to the old Republican principles. But the Democratic party which elected him was not governed in the way the old Republican party had been; Andrew Jackson had ruled it personally and alone. Consequently, after his retirement the party needed to be re-organized to make up the lack of his leadership, and for that task of re-organization a man of Van Buren's reputed political talents ought to have been ideally suited. Yet during his Presidency the Little Magician did not attempt it. Even in normal times he might not have done so, for despite his reputation he was neither an innovator nor an aggressive, domineering man. And the times were not normal: Van Buren had all he could do in trying to protect himself from the political consequences of the Panic of 1837, which he had inherited, along with the Presidency, from Andrew Jackson.

* * *

Jackson had not caused the Panic all by himself, but his policies--which Van Buren had publicly endorsed despite private doubts about them--had done a great deal to bring it about. The payment of the federal debt, one of Jackson's proudest accomplishments, had rendered a part of the federal revenue surplus. Revenue could not be reduced without reopening the tariff controversy which had threatened to disrupt the Union; expenditures could not be much increased because of Jackson's constitutional scruples against appropriations for internal transportation. So the surplus had piled up in the state banks in which Jackson, in defiance of Congress, had deposited the government's funds; and the depository banks, on the strength of their greatly increased deposits, had expanded their loans. The ensuing inflationary boom had swelled the receipts of the federal customs houses and land offices, which in turn had increased the surplus and, thereby, the willingness of the banks to make loans. Even one so innocent of economic knowledge as Jackson was could see that the bubble would eventually burst, that the federal deposits would be lost in the collapse of the banks which were using them to inflate the currency, and that he would be blamed for the calamity. So, in August, 1836, Jackson had tried to restrain the depository banks from lending by prohibiting the acceptance of banknotes in payment for the public lands.[2]

The "Specie Circular," as Jackson's order was called, was an awkward device for the purpose and, what was more, it was employed too late: by the fall of 1836 the economy was already

under strong deflationary pressures.[3] By the time Congress met in its lameduck session after the election of 1836, many businessmen and politicians were pleading with Jackson to withdraw the Specie Circular in order to prevent a financial panic. When he refused, Congress passed a bill ordering the revocation of the Circular, but the adamant Jackson killed it with a pocket veto. The clamorers for relief then turned to the new President, Van Buren.[4]

The Magician was at first uncertain what to do, but Jackson soon convinced him that the Specie Circular must be maintained. But for it, he argued, the depository banks would lend themselves into bankruptcy, the federal deposits would be lost, and the new administration would be blasted by failure before it had fairly begun. Van Buren, though frightened by the demand for revocation and by reports of increasing distress in Eastern financial centers, once more followed Jackson's lead: the Circular would remain in effect.[5]

In the past Van Buren had profited by siding with Jackson; this time it did him little good. Soon after he had made his decision, in May, 1837, the financial panic which he and Jackson had feared, and which the Circular had been intended to prevent, swept the country. All the banks, including every depository bank, suspended specie payments.[6] Van Buren faced a national crisis and a grave threat to his own political future.

* * *

Van Buren decided at once to call Congress into special session in September; meanwhile he considered what he should propose to Congress when it met. As the wave of bank

suspensions, business failures, foreclosures, and unemployment swept over the country, political and financial experts deluged Van Buren with advice. One of the volunteer pundits was Dr. John Brockenbrough, bank president and member of the Richmond Junto in Virginia. Brockenbrough suggested that the federal government employ no banks whatever, but let its own officers care for its funds--a plan which was variously known as the "Independent Treasury," the "Sub-Treasury," or "Divorce of Bank and State." In order to complete the separation of the government from the banking system, Brockenbrough further proposed that the government refuse to receive any forms of currency except its own securities and specie; this idea was known, during the decade of controversy about it which followed, as the "Specie Clause."[7]

In support of his recommendations, Brockenbrough offered arguments drawn from economic theory, from orthodox Jeffersonian interpretation of the Constitution, and from the recent economic experience of the country. But the strongest argument for his proposals was that Van Buren had no acceptable alternative to them. If he asked Congress to establish some new institution comparable to the Bank of the United States, he would be admitting that Jackson's war upon that bank--in which he had been prominent--had been a mistake and was, as the Whigs were charging, the cause of the Panic. If Van Buren continued to employ state banks as depositories he would be in an equally embarrassing position. To justify such a course he would have to argue that the depository banks had not been to blame for the Panic--and if they were guiltless, why had Jackson issued the Specie Circular

and why had Van Buren maintained it?

The Magician had no choice, then, but to accept Brockenbrough's or some similar plan. Yet before committing himself to it irrevocably, he asked the advice of other leading Democrats, including the most prominent Senators. While the Magician invited discussion--he even asserted that the condition of the country allowed "free action" by Congress on the subject--he plainly indicated his own preference for Brockenbrough's plan. The freedom of action to which he referred was freedom to abandon the state bank depository system, not freedom from presidential leadership. At the same time he made it clear that what he most desired was consultation leading to unity among the members of the party in Congress.[8]

Most of them whom Van Buren consulted agreed that the Independent Treasury, with the possible addition of measures to prohibit the circulation of banknotes of small denominations and to close banks which suspended specie payments, ought to be the Democratic party's legislative response to the Panic.[9] But determined opposition came from two Senators: Nathaniel P. Tallmadge of New York and William C. Rives of Virginia. Before the Panic, both had urged the revocation of the Specie Circular; Rives had gone so far as to tell Van Buren that the "full control" of Congress over such matters "cannot be questioned." In response to the Magician's request for advice and consultation about Brockenbrough's scheme, Rives was not only uncooperative, but hostile. He said nothing about seeking agreement with other leaders of the party, and he denounced the Independent Treasury and the Specie Clause as devices

for giving the government and the officeholders a currency of gold while the people were left with nothing but worthless bank paper. Tallmadge also opposed Brockenbrough's plan and began openly recruiting New York Democrats for the defence of the "credit system"--that is, the deposit of federal funds in state banks so that they could be loaned to businessmen. Tallmadge and Rives had decided to ally themselves with the state banks and with the speculators who depended upon them, even in opposition to Van Buren and the majority of the party. Rives's friend, Thomas Ritchie, also opposed the Independent Treasury but did not, like the two Senators and a handful of Democrats in the House of Representatives who followed their lead, do so in a manner which was personally hostile to the Magician.[10]

By June 12, 1837, Van Buren too had made up his mind. He had long hesitated, considering all possible policies; he had consulted other party leaders and had obtained the support of most of them. To have begun so cautiously was typical of him, but so was the determination with which he acted once he had reached a decision. When Congress met he defied those who, he was convinced, would be his enemies no matter what he did. He recommended the only financial policy which he could defend without admitting that Jackson and he had been wrong, even though it meant splitting his party and depriving it of control of Congress. The master of non-committalism committed himself to seek the separation of the federal government from all banks, state or national.[11]

* * *

The opposition of the Tallmadge-Rives Democrats to the

Independent Treasury scheme put the Administration in the minority on the issue in the special session of Congress in 1837 and in the two regular sessions which followed, during each of which a bill embodying the plan was defeated. But during the debates on these bills, Silas Wright of New York, Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri, and other loyal Democrats continued the propaganda for the measure which had been begun by the Washington Globe and other Democratic newspapers during the summer of 1837.[12] Their arguments jibed with the explanation of the causes of the Panic which ex-President Jackson and other anti-bank Democrats had already advanced, with other popular ideas of the time, and with the stock arguments of the Democratic party. The result was a coherent and appealing ideology.

Jackson's theory was: that the Panic resulted from a conspiracy of Nicholas Biddle, President of the Bank of the United States, with British capitalists; that the plotters had sought to drain the United States of gold and thereby prove the need for a national bank; and that the depository banks and the land speculators had been drawn into the evil scheme by their greed for inordinate profits.[13] Van Buren's supporters deduced from this conspiracy theory that the government should have nothing to do with either the Bank or the banks, and that it should prevent the use of its funds by selfish speculators.[14]

Even before the Panic, advocates of "equal rights" and "moral reform" had been attacking the banks as dangerous, unjust, and undemocratic monopolies, and during the depression which followed they intensified their assaults. Inspired by

British theorists and reformers, by arguments that had been devised to refute the doctrine of protectionism, and by oldfashioned Jeffersonian principles, agitators demanded free competition in banking, the limitation of bank lending operations to the discounting of "real commercial paper," the imposition of full liability for a bank's debts on every stockholder, and even the abolition of incorporated banking.[15] They proposed other reforms, too--incorporation by general law rather than by special act of legislation, codification of the Common Law, and the repeal of all laws for the compulsory collection of debts--the intention of which was to separate business from politics, to prevent the power of government and the influence of politicians from being employed for or against any business enterprise, and to make moral rectitude, ability, and wealth the sole determinants of success in business.[16]

The advocates of such "moral reform" appealed to those Americans whose consciences were troubled by their own pursuit of wealth by maintaining a distinction between "the man of prudence, judgment, and experience" who engaged only in "persevering industry," and the "adventurer in business," who was "resolved to make [his fortune] and live in fashion, without industry or economy," whose "gambling and demoralizing speculations" had produced an "unnatural enhancement of prices" which had caused the Panic, and whose sinful operations had been financed by politically created and politically controlled banks.[17] The reformers also appealed to the American belief in "equal rights" for all. Monopolies of banking, special acts of incorporation,

limited liability, and the Common Law were, they charged, remnants of English aristocracy which must be abolished if the American Revolution was to be carried to its logical conclusion. The reforms they demanded were democratic, they argued, because they would deprive the government of the power to give anyone privileges which were not enjoyed by everyone else.[18]

The "equal rights" philosophy was not only popular but adaptable. In the hands of such ostensible champions of the workingman as Robert Rantoul, Jr., of Massachusetts and William Leggett of New York it was employed in an effort to turn the class feeling of the "producing class" into safe channels and to provide a cover for the indoctrination of workingmen with the capitalist ethic.[19] At the same time, John C. Calhoun and other opponents of protective tariffs found in the "equal rights" argument a modern version of the old Jeffersonian creed, which insisted that the federal government must not put taxes on imports to enrich northern businessmen at the expense of southern planters.[20]

It was just as easy for the Democratic advocates of the Independent Treasury to adopt the 'equal rights" philosophy to their purposes. In the first place, their favorite measure was logically consistent with the goals of the reformers: for the government to deposit its funds in certain selected banks, whose officers could then loan them to their personal and political friends, was a conferral on a few of special privileges denied to the many. In the second place, the Democratic party's established line was that it represented the masses, American democracy, and the Future, while the Whigs spoke for the wealthy few, British

aristocracy, and the Past.[21] Moreover Henry Clay, the principal Whig leader, was a prominent advocate of protective tariffs, a national bank, and federal aid for internal improvements, all of which were contrary to the doctrine of equal rights. Advocacy of the Independent Treasury and the Specie Clause on equal rights grounds, therefore, enabled the Democrats to join all their arguments against the Whigs into a single, coherent system, and to broaden Jackson's explanation of the Panic as the result of a conspiracy of British and American bankers into a general indictment of all Whig measures as the products of an anti-democratic alliance of British aristocrats with American plutocrats.[22]

Despite their inability to enact the Independent Treasury bill, then, Van Buren's supporters were able to employ a powerful array of appeals to the voters in the elections of 1838-1839, and in those elections the Administration Democrats won a narrow but still decisive victory. In the summer of 1840 the Independent Treasury was finally enacted; thereafter, acceptance of this reform was as much a test of true Democracy as opposition to a national bank.[23]

* * *

A second time the Little Magician had rebounded from an apparently disastrous setback and, in the process, he had added a plank to the platform which Andrew Jackson had constructed for the Democratic party. He had also added to his own reputation as a man of principle; he had committed himself to the defence of a measure which, though it proved to have no serious economic consequences, was controversial itself and was associated with still

more controversial economic and political theories.

Van Buren had committed himself; and yet his commitment was limited by the same considerations of necessity and expediency which had dictated it. The full application of the doctrine of equal rights required a broad attack upon all forms of political interference in the economy. The advocacy of the Independent Treasury on equal rights grounds threatened, therefore, to reduce the membership of the Democratic party to those who were willing to engage in such a crusade. Under similar circumstances Jackson had acted boldly, and had driven so many Democrats out of the party that he might be called the founder of the Whig party. But Van Buren, despite his association with Jackson and Jackson's principles, did not have Jackson's power to retain and even increase his popular support despite rebellions by lesser party leaders. And so the Magician and his friends had been careful not to go too far in their use of the equal rights propaganda; they had made concessions, both in regard to the Independent Treasury and in other respects, in order to limit the extent of the rebellion led by Rives and Tallmadge and to prevent it from destroying the party.

The most dramatic evidence of the weakness which compelled Van Buren to follow such a course was the high price he paid for the assistance of Senator John C. Calhoun of South Carolina. Calhoun had broken with Jackson and Van Buren during Jackson's first term and had not even spoken to Van Buren since 1831; but the South Carolinian favored the Independent Treasury and so Van Buren, faced by the defection of Rives, Tallmadge, and

their friends, welcomed Calhoun and his faction back into the Democratic party. The Washington Globe, the President's editorial spokesman and formerly Calhoun's bitter critic, praised the Senator's speeches and virtually endorsed all of his principles--including the premises upon which the doctrine of nullification had been based. Furthermore, the final version of the Independent Treasury bill included a modified version of the Specie Clause because Calhoun insisted on it. And at the beginning of the session of Congress which enacted the bill, William H. Roane, one of Van Buren's Virginia friends, arranged a personal meeting between Van Buren and Calhoun. The two dined together at the White House and agreed to forget past personal differences because of their present agreement on basic political principles.[24] The reconciliation was superficial--neither man trusted the other--but the Magician could not get along without the help of the Carolinian and his friends.

Calhoun consented to the reconciliation because he believed Van Buren was in his power, and he had good reason to think so. In January, 1838, Democratic Senators--including the Magician's closest associates--voted for resolutions drafted by Calhoun on the nature of the Union, the relationship of the states to it and to one another, and the status of slavery in the District of Columbia and in the territories. And the statement on the tariff in the Democratic platform of 1840, while not committing the party to free trade, was satisfactory to Calhoun, who had a right to believe that the party as a whole, and particularly Van Buren, had adopted his platform.[25]

At the same time that they won Calhoun's support by including a modified Specie Clause in the final version of the Independent Treasury bill and by moving toward the ultra state rights position on slavery and the tariff, Van Buren and his aides sought to placate the Democratic defenders of the state banks. The Specie Clause was enacted, but only in a limited form and only because more votes could thus be gained from the Calhoun men than could be obtained from the Tallmadge-Rives Democrats and the Whigs by leaving it out.[26] Furthermore, though Van Buren recommended a federal bankruptcy law for banks in his message to the special session of Congress in September, 1837, both he and the Congress ignored the idea until 1839. As for the prohibition of banknotes of small denominations, Van Buren, as a good Jeffersonian, left that project to the states.[27] In short, the Magician sought to make the Treasury just independent enough of the banks to call it an Independent Treasury; beyond that minimum of reform he did not insist on going.

By this means he avoided the chief danger in the use of the equal rights propaganda: the alienation of those Democrats who were accustomed to use the economic powers of the state and federal governments as a form of political patronage. There were never enough spoils to go around, and many Democrats would resist any proposal greatly to reduce the supply during such hard times as those after the Panic of 1837. Bitter intraparty disputes had already broken out in New York, Missouri, and other states where so-called Locofoco or Radical Democrats had tried to commit the party to a fullscale reform program.[28] Van Buren and his friends

were careful not to go that far, and fortunately for them there was no necessity to do so. Federal economic activities were mainly confined to four areas: banking, the tariff, internal improvements, and the public lands. Jackson had already committed the party against high protective tariffs and internal improvement appropriations, and most Democrats favored a land policy under which the poor man could easily buy a farm but the federal lands would not be given away--a policy consistent with the doctrine of equal rights.[29] Only in regard to banking did Van Buren have to commit the party further, and even there he confined himself to the minimum necessary to deal with the effects on the federal government of the suspension of specie payments by the banks.

Thus Van Buren's endorsement of the Independent Treasury was in a form which allowed his supporters to use the appealing propaganda of the equal rights movement but did not require them to make an unnecessarily great sacrifice of the spoils they gained through the interference of the federal and state governments in the economy. As the Independent Treasury plan became more familiar to the public, as its popularity grew, and as Democratic politicians, many of whom had been terrified by the Panic and by the split in the party, regained their confidence and realized how little Van Buren was asking of them, most of them rallied in support of him and his proposal.[30]

* * *

It took a long time for some Democrats to decide to support the Administration, however, and in the meantime Van

Buren was remarkably patient. He was especially tolerant of the hesitancy of two New Yorkers who had been members of the Regency, Governor William L. Marcy and Edwin Croswell, editor of the Albany Argus; Thomas Ritchie, editor of the Richmond Enquirer, also was treated kindly despite his open opposition to the Independent Treasury. Actually, the Magician was not so angry at the conduct of Tallmadge and Rives as at the refusal of such old friends as Marcy, Croswell, and Ritchie to endorse his policies; and yet he concealed his anger at the three because he needed such support as they would give him and because they did not, like the two Senators, attack him personally.

Marcy and Croswell did not even publicly attack the Independent Treasury plan. Instead, Marcy kept silent while Croswell, saying little about it in his editorials, gave space in the Argus to the Democratic opponents of the measure.[31] Van Buren did nothing about this during the summer of 1837, but after he had delivered his message to the special session of Congress early in September he passed the word to Croswell, through Senator Wright and New York Comptroller Azariah C. Flagg, that it was "now time that the Argus should come out." His message, he believed, was such that Croswell could support it "without equivocation." In a rare show of irritation, he added that "to have Mr. Ritchie in opposition on one side and [you] non-committal on the other . . . is a little too much."[32]

Nevertheless there was no change in the editorial policy of the Argus, and Croswell and Marcy wrote letters to the New York delegation in Congress in which they vigorously criticized

the Washington Globe for its attacks on the state banks, and complained about the conduct of the anti-bank Democrats in New York. Late in September Croswell printed two anonymous articles and a speech by Senator Tallmadge denouncing the Independent Treasury, but he did not publish Wright's reply to Tallmadge until much later. And when the Independent Treasury bill was defeated in the House of Representatives, Croswell editorially blamed both factions of the party for the defeat and called for harmony![33]

Harmony was Thomas Ritchie's theme, too. For more than thirty years he had remained the leader first of the Republican and then of the Democratic party in Virginia by never giving a command until he had looked over his shoulder to see which way the army was marching. Whenever the party had divided, and at other times when the timid Ritchie had thought it might do so, he had kept silent or straddled the issue while pleading for party unity.[34] Now Senator Rives was leading some Virginia Democrats off toward the Whig camp while others of them rallied around the President, and Ritchie was unwilling to part company with either group.

Despite the fact that his cousin and political ally, Dr. John Brockenbrough, had recommended the Independent Treasury scheme to Van Buren, Ritchie was determinedly opposed to it. In 1833-1834, during the financial panic brought on by Jackson's attack upon the Bank of the United States, Ritchie had championed the state banks against the Bank on state rights grounds; always sensitive about his consistency, he was unwilling to advocate a new federal financial policy which could be interpreted as

strengthening the federal government at the expense of the states and of the banks the states had established. Yet he was equally unwilling to leave the Democratic party, as Rives was doing, and join the hated Whigs. So he pleaded for harmony and begged both Rives and Van Buren to "save our party."[35]

That, of course, was what the Little Magician was trying to do: to save as much of the party as he could. So he bridled his anger at Marcy, Croswell, and Ritchie, and patiently waited for them to get back in step. He concealed his feelings well; one of his New York friends thought, because he was outwardly so calm, that he did not know how much trouble Marcy, Croswell, and their associates were causing; but during the winter of 1837-1838, Van Buren had to take pills for biliousness.[36]

Eventually his patience was rewarded. In 1838 Marcy and Croswell endorsed the Independent Treasury, and in seeking re-election, the Governor ran on a platform which endorsed Van Buren's policies.[37] Ritchie did not come around until later, after the elections of 1838-1839 had shown the increasing popularity of the Independent Treasury and after other Virginia Democrats, loyal to the President, had threatened to displace Ritchie as leader of the party in their state.[38]

Meanwhile Van Buren had continued to work with Marcy, Croswell, and Ritchie and to maintain, at least on the surface, amicable relations with them, and after they gave their full support to the Magician their previous hesitancy seemed to be forgotten. In fact Wright, who was Van Buren's alter ego, suppressed a movement among the anti-bank Democrats in New York

to run him for Governor in 1840; instead, he and the Magician favored the nomination of William C. Bouck, a Canal Commissioner who was popular with the Marcy-Croswell faction. Bouck, Wright explained to his friends, was the best candidate "for the election we are going to have." He admitted that he doubted Bouck's "firmness" on financial issues, but he had convinced himself that the election would settle those very issues and simultaneously identify Bouck with and commit him to the principles Van Buren was defending. Meanwhile, it would strengthen Van Buren to associate him with a gubernatorial candidate who was not yet fully identified with his principles.[39]

Wright's specious argument for the nomination of Bouck showed how well he understood what Van Buren's weakness required of him and his friends. As in 1836, the Magician had to accept whatever help he could get. Rather than attempt, as Jackson had done, to impose his own personality and program on the party, the Magician had to allow--even to solicit--anyone to be a Democrat who was willing to be in the same party with President Martin Van Buren.

* * *

The weakness of Van Buren's hold on the Democratic party was further demonstrated by his inability to settle a dispute over the vice presidential nomination in 1840. Hopelessly divided by the contest, the Democratic national convention of 1840 had to adopt the humiliating expedient of making no nomination at all.

The contest was so hard fought because, as in 1835,

presidential ambitions and the succession to Van Buren were involved in it. Secretary of State John Forsyth, a protégé of William H. Crawford, had the support of his own Georgia organization and of the enemies in Pennsylvania of Senator James Buchanan. The latter, who was building up strength for a future presidential nomination, was backing Senator William R. King of Alabama. Ex-President Jackson favored another would-be President, James K. Polk of Tennessee. And the incumbent Vice President, Colonel Richard M. Johnson of Kentucky, who also hungered for the Presidency--or for any other remunerative office which turned up in the meantime--wanted to be renominated. The Virginia Democrats, still bitterly opposed to Johnson, supported Littleton Waller Tazewell.

Like Calhoun, who favored Van Buren's renomination while hoping to succeed him as leader of the Democratic party, Buchanan, Johnson, and other presidential aspirants were willing to let Van Buren seek a second term. Having supported his policies they had no excuse for opposing him; they had no desire to run on his record; and they had good reason to doubt that any Democrat could win in 1840. So they contented themselves with jockeying for future position while Van Buren, who had no illusions about their loyalty to himself, nevertheless had to avoid antagonizing any of them. That was why no vice presidential nomination was made. The affair, like Van Buren's surrender to Calhoun and his tolerance of Marcy's, Croswell's, and Ritchie's conduct, showed how little progress he had made, since the national convention of 1835, in mastering his party.[40]

Thus in 1840, as in the previous presidential election, Van Buren had to allow all sorts of Democrats to support him, pretty much on their own terms. That he avoided driving any of his jealous rivals out of the party was another proof of his remarkable ability to control himself. But the fact remains that his reputed mastery of the art of creating and controlling a political organization played no important part in his presidential career.

* * *

Van Buren might have won re-election in 1840 despite such grudging support as he received if he had not encountered one last consequence of Andrew Jackson's financial policies. In 1838 there had been a brief economic recovery from the Panic of 1837, but in 1839 there was a new crisis, and it was followed by a long and deep depression. The Whigs, sensing in 1840 that the voters were inclined their way, were careful not to waste the advantage which the depression gave them. Instead of the controversial Henry Clay, they nominated William Henry Harrison, a hero of the War of 1812. Rather than adopt a platform, they promised the country "Harrison and better times." By means of parades, songs, and enthusiastic mass meetings they preserved the popular mood in their favor, and by a thorough organization of their electioneering activities, far superior to that of the dis-spirited Democrats, they turned out a larger vote than had ever before been cast in a presidential election. As a result, Van Buren was defeated.[41]

The election of 1840 left the Magician in a difficult position. To fulfill his ambition he would have to secure yet

another presidential nomination, but in seeking it he would no longer have the advantage of being the incumbent or the favorite of the incumbent. He would have, indeed, few other advantages except the distinction of being known as a man of principle whose principles were those to which the party was committed.

But that was no small advantage for, in the absence of a powerful, popular leader like Jackson, and of any such nationwide organization as Van Buren was supposed to have created but had not, adherence to those principles was all that held the Democratic party together.

## CHAPTER III

## THE COMPETITION BEGINS

> "We must do enough to put down the matter of course idea, that Van is to be our candidate next time."
>
> Dixon H. Lewis
> May 31, 1842[1]

In the election of 1840 Martin Van Buren had suffered a great defeat; but, as in 1825 when his enemies had gloated over his seemingly complete destruction, the Little Magician neither despaired nor gave up his ambition. His position was, in fact, better after the election of 1840 than it had been after the defeat of Crawford and the repudiation of the congressional caucus. Then he had been primarily a state leader of his party whose national reputation was new and not very savory. Then he had been the head only of a faction, and the party of which it had been an element was shattered. Then he had been defeated as the chief advocate of what the people had decided was a corrupt and undemocratic method of choosing the President. After the election of 1840 he was better known throughout the country than any other active Democrat, and known as the defender of Jackson's principles and as the advocate of the Independent Treasury. Furthermore, he had gone down to defeat with his party under him: there had been no important secession from its ranks after 1837 and Democratic

support for his renomination had been almost unanimous if not enthusiastic, and the party as a whole had been defeated only by a narrow margin which it might easily reverse. Lastly, Van Buren's defeat had not been a popular repudiation of his principles, and to the extent that he had been personally rejected, it was more for having the misfortune to be President during a depression than for any supposed malfeasance. The Whigs had charged him with extravagance and corruption, but their calumnies would look ridiculous when the fever of the election campaign had subsided, and Van Buren's calm and dignified acceptance of defeat would encourage a popular reaction in his favor. In short, the Little Magician's situation after the election of 1840 justified his decision to seek a third presidential nomination for 1844.[2]

But, after eight years of dependence on Andrew Jackson and four more of desperately trying to hold the Democratic party together on almost any terms after the Panic of 1837, Van Buren was in no position to command his own renomination. And he knew it.

* * *

It was true that Van Buren had the backing of the largest and geographically the most expensive faction within the Democratic party, but that was only because his rivals had been so unsuccessful in forming organizations of their own. Van Buren relied chiefly on the New York Democrats and on the remnants of the Crawford Radicals in the South and the Northeast, but among both groups there were men who had been unenthusiastic about the Independent Treasury and who were not dependable. The Magician

had acquired some new friends through his association with Jackson: Senator Thomas Hart Benton and his Missouri organization; the main body of the Ohio Democrats, led by Senators William Allen and Benjamin Tappan and by Samuel Medary, the editor of the Columbus Ohio Statesman; an active clique of federal officebolders in Philadelphia, led by Henry D. Gilpin, Henry Horn, and the Philadelphia Pennsylvanian; and Frank Blair and his influential Washington Globe. Lastly, there were younger men, like George Bancroft of Massachusetts and Governor John Fairfield of Maine, who had risen to prominence in their states during the 1830's as Jackson and Van Buren men and as supporters of the Independent Treasury.[3] Together, these groups of Van Buren Democrats constituted a large minority of the party, and they controlled some of its most important newspapers; but they were neither so numerous nor so tightly organized as to be able to dominate the party. They did not give Van Buren a political power comparable to that which Jackson had exercised.

Far from being able to command his renomination, Van Buren did not even command his own organization. Some of his competitors thought he did--that Senator Silas Wright acted for him at Washington as the center of a vast network of correspondence and consultation, through which the Magician directed a host of well drilled politicians.[4] In truth, the organization was informal and even amorphous, and it received much less overt direction from the top than the uninitiated imagined.

It is true that Wright was in constant touch with Van Buren during sessions of Congress; the two wrote each other

frequently and shared letters which they received from others.[5] Now and then Wright did prompt action by members of the organization; for example, in January, 1843, he conferred with Senator Allen about the "proper course" for Ohio Democrats to pursue, and Allen passed the word to Medary.[6] Also, the Van Buren men in Congress sometimes consulted about legislation. But on the two most important issues in one session, Wright voted against Senators Benton and Allen.[7] And there was no such thing as a Van Buren caucus or central committee at Washington until a few weeks before the national convention of 1844; even then there was no attempt to direct from Washington the activities of politicians all over the country. Wright was not, then, too far from the truth when he claimed, early in 1843, that he and other Van Buren men in Congress had refrained from electioneering. They had not, he said, "made a motion, and any results which are seen are not of our production, but . . . proceed from the deep pervading sense of justice and principle of the Democracy of the country."[8]

The "Democracy of the country" to whom Wright referred were Van Buren men because they saw their own advantage in adherence to a leader of long experience and proved ability, who played politics by the rules of the game, and who was well known as the advocate of the policies and principles to which the party was committed. They had not been recruited by promises of offices, but they knew that they had a good chance to share the spoils of any victory they helped to win. They did not need to be told explicitly what to do; if they had been so naive or inept as to ignore the hints in the editorials of the Washington Globe

and the Albany Argus, or in the public letters which Van Buren wrote in response to complimentary resolutions adopted by local political meetings, their help would have been worthless. They could not be trusted implicitly, because they might at any time decide that it was to their advantage to abandon Van Buren; so he and Wright were wise not to enter into any conspiracies with them. Even if they remained loyal, their advice on national politics was of limited value because they paid more attention to the needs and prejudices of their local and state constituencies than to the opinions of the national electorate on which a presidential candidate had to depend.

It was not, then, as the commander of a great army of politicians that Van Buren sought to preserve his titular leadership of the Democratic party and to get its presidential nomination once more. Rather, he walked a tightrope, almost unassisted. There was a net beneath him, but if he slipped it might dissolve as he fell. It was made of tentative commitments, grudging half-trust, and that fragile braid of expediency, habit, fear, and hope called "party loyalty."

* * *

If Van Buren had planned a vigorous, aggressive campaign for the nomination, such an organization--which might follow Van Buren but could not be driven by him and which might lead the party but could not dominate it--would have been a great handicap. But his plan was quite different: he meant to conduct a still hunt. He would watch and wait, making no movement which might scare off the game or attract the competition of rivals.

Indeed, he hoped to win the nomination by discouraging the discussion of the subject.

Only a few days after he left the White House, in March, 1841, the Magician revealed his strategy. The Democrats in the Missouri legislature, prompted by the aggressive Senator Thomas Hart Benton, had adopted a resolution naming Van Buren as their candidate for President in 1844. In replying to the compliment, Van Buren set the theme for his campaign for the nomination by asserting that he had no interest in the next presidential election except to see the triumph of his and the party's principles. He advised the Missouri Democrats to confine themselves, for the present, to the defence of those principles, and to defer the discussion of candidates to "a more suitable period."[9]

In denying personal ambition, Van Buren was not candid; but he was quite sincere in urging postponement of the contest for the nomination and in calling on Democrats to rally in support of their principles. He was also eager to have members of the party remain indignant over the alleged theft of the election of 1840 by the Whigs, whom he and his friends accused of smearing him, drowning the issues in a sea of hard cider and hoopla, and even stuffing the ballot boxes.[10] Van Buren was personally associated with the opposition to a national bank and the advocacy of the Independent Treasury which had been in the forefront of the party's campaign in 1840. He had been the principal victim of the Whigs' alleged skullduggery. Discussion of these topics would, therefore, tend to fix him in the minds of Democrats as their logical--indeed, their inevitable--nominee

in 1844, especially if there was no talk about the nomination *per se*.

If other Democrats persisted in promoting this or that prospective candidate, Van Buren's friends could call them back, as he had the Missouri Democrats, to the duty of uniting the party in defence of its principles, rather than dividing it. While potential rivals were thus discouraged from advertising their candidacies, Van Buren's reputation, his talented friends, and his personal connection with the Democratic platform would give him a great advantage in the contests for control of the party organizations in the states and, through them, of the national convention.

This plan was characteristic, in several respects, of the Little Magician's political technique. It was clever, it combined emphasis on principles with personal advantage, and it did not require him either to advance any bold new idea or to compete openly with a rival for the public favor. But Van Buren's situation after the election of 1840 required him to make some changes; he could no longer, as in the past, shape his own course in response to the actions and motives of others. Instead, by calling for the postponement of the contest for the nomination and for united support of the party's old platform, Van Buren and his associates were trying to control his rivals. If he had been able to do that, there would have been little need for him to still hunt.

* * *

"The election of 1840 has demoralized the public

mind," Senator Silas Wright peevishly observed in February, 1843, " . . . and men now openly seek the Presidency who would scarcely have had the confidence, in a better age, to have demanded . . . the office of Colonel of a militia regiment . . ."[11] Wright referred to the presidential candidacies of Commodore Charles Stewart of Pennsylvania, Colonel Richard M. Johnson of Kentucky, and General Lewis Cass of Michigan; and if his estimate of their talents was unfair, his reference to the election of 1840 was appropriate: their candidacies were patterned on that of the war hero William Henry Harrison, who had defeated Van Buren. Each of the three was, like Harrison, more or less a hero of the War of 1812;[12] each hoped that his martial glory would make him more available politically than Van Buren, just as Harrison had displaced Henry Clay; and each drew support from the areas where Harrison had aroused the most enthusiasm, Pennsylvania and the Old Northwest.

The three did differ from Harrison in one important respect: he had been supported by an extensive organization of astute and powerful politicians, while none of them had such an organization or could be a real threat to Van Buren unless enough excitement about his military exploits could be generated to attract similar support. Any of them might prove to be another Harrison, or even another Jackson; but this was yet to be shown, so none of them had much appeal to those Democrats who could advance themselves by supporting a better established candidate. It was, therefore, primarily those Democrats who were in the minority of the party in their states who advocated the

nomination of Stewart, Johnson, or Cass.

The friends of Commodore Stewart were the first to defy Van Buren's injunction against talk about presidential candidates. In May, 1841, a group of ward politicians in Philadelphia nominated the Commodore and formed an "Old Ironsides" club to publicize his candidacy. There was little response and, despite later attempts to revive it, Stewart's candidacy amounted to nothing more than a warning to the Magician that he could not win by default.[13]

The nomination of Colonel Richard M. Johnson by the Democratic members of the Kentucky legislature, early in 1842, was a more serious matter, for he had considerable popularity in the West and among eastern workingmen. Despite their distaste for him personally and their anger at his presumption in competing with Van Buren, the Magician and his friends were so impressed with Johnson's popularity, especially in areas where Van Buren was not popular, that they were willing to let him have the vice presidential nomination again.[14] Johnson's political position in the early 1840's was similar to what it had been ten years earlier, when he had briefly been the center of an anti-Van Buren movement within the Democratic party. He still had more appeal to the lower classes than any other prominent politician, and this made him useful to opponents of Van Buren and other established party leaders, who nevertheless did not wish to antagonize him.

In Pennsylvania, where Governor David M. Porter was looking for a place to go after his second term ended in 1844, Johnson's candidacy was particularly important. The Governor's

enemies charged that, knowing he had no political future within the state, he was stimulating opposition to the presidential candidacies of Van Buren and Senator James Buchanan in order to give himself an entry into national politics. Porter denied the accusation, but his personal friends and political appointees were active in the Johnson movement.[15]

Aside from his lack of support from dominant elements within the Democratic party and his personal eccentricities, Johnson's greatest disadvantage was that he did not actively compete against Van Buren. He took no position on public issues different from Van Buren's, and he let it be known that he would accept second place to Van Buren on the ticket, as he had done in 1835, if that was all he could get.[16] Because he was not so intimately connected with the Independent Treasury as the Magician, and because his advantages as a military hero were largely cancelled out by his unorthodox personal conduct, Johnson was not a stronger candidate than Van Buren in a contest in which the financial issues of the previous decade were paramount.

Still, he might profit from a collision between Van Buren and some other candidate, or his supporters might be numerous enough to bargain him once more into the Vice Presidency, so Johnson had no reason to give up the race.[17] Meanwhile, his candidacy was a convenience to those Democrats who, in Pennsylvania or elsewhere, were struggling to win control of the party.

Lewis Cass's military exploits during the War of 1812 had been much less glorious than Stewart's or Johnson's. He had been at Detroit when it was surrendered without a fight to the

British and, in anger at the supposed cowardice of his commander, he had broken his sword over his knee. As a paroled prisoner of war and then as the occupant of primarily administrative positions in the Army, Cass had had no other good opportunity to display his bellicosity during the war.[18]

He somewhat made up this lack in January, 1842, by declaring verbal war on Great Britain. He was serving at the time as Minister to France, to which office Jackson had appointed him. The occasion of his singlehanded state of belligerency was the effort of the British government to suppress the African slave trade. In a letter to the French foreign minister, which he wrote and delivered without consulting his government at home, Cass condemned certain British proposals for the suppression of the trade on the grounds that they had been accompanied by impudent threats and that they were the first step in a new British attack upon the freedom of the seas. Cass also published, in the European press, a not very anonymous denunciation of the British and their plans.[19]

By March, 1842, Cass's outburst had reached the American audience for which it was intended and his presidential campaign was under way. The public letter was a remarkable document: while ostensibly urging the French to reject the British proposals, Cass had managed to remind Americans in the Old Northwest of their ancient grievances against the British in Canada, to champion the rights of New England shipowners and sailors, and --while gently affirming his own desire to see the eventual abolition of Negro slavery--to curry favor with Southerners by

defending their right to deal with the problem without outside interference. For good measure he had thrown in a reference to the sufferings of the Irish under British rule.[20]

To give his stand more publicity, Cass asked Senator Rives of Virginia to introduce in the Senate a resolution calling on the Administration for copies of his correspondence with the French government. Because the President would have been angered and embarrassed by such a request, Rives declined to make it; but he did insert, in the Washington Globe, an article lauding Cass. And he urged the bellicose diplomat to come home to lead an impending popular movement away from the rash partisanship of Clay and Van Buren and back to "the 'old paths' of Jeffersonian and Madisonian Republicanism."[21]

Meanwhile Cass's private secretary, Nathaniel Niles, was busily soliciting for him the aid of such prominent Democrats as George Bancroft of Massachusetts, William L. Marcy of New York, and George M. Dallas of Pennsylvania, and hinting rather crudely of the cabinet seats and other honors they might expect if Cass became President.[22] These efforts came to little, but Cass did have friends in Harrisburg, the capital of Pennsylvania, where a public meeting nominated him to the Presidency. In response, the New York Herald asserted that Cass could, "with proper attention and effort, be carried into the White House with a universal shout of acclamation."[23] Cass himself continued his war with Great Britain, and when he learned of the negotiation of the Webster-Ashburton Treaty he opened fire on the Secretary of State, too. He resigned his post in France, in protest against the Treaty, and

returned home to oppose its ratification.[24]

When Cass arrived in Boston, in December, 1842, he discovered an unexpected obstacle to his campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination: there was doubt that he was a Democrat. As a member of Jackson's Cabinet, he had not publicly supported Jackson's war on the Bank of the United States. Further, it was rumored that Senator Rives, who had left the Democratic party in opposition to Van Buren's Independent Treasury scheme, was managing Cass's campaign. Consequently, the crowd of distinguished citizens who greeted Cass upon his arrival in Boston included Whigs as well as anti-Van Buren Democrats, and some Whig newspapers endorsed his candidacy on the grounds that he was not opposed to the establishment of a new national bank.[25] This was embarrassing to Cass, who considered himself a Democrat. To set the record straight, he wrote a letter to Governor Mahlon Dickerson of New Jersey, for publication, in which he announced his opposition to a national bank and his approval of the Independent Treasury. He later repeated these pledges of Democratic orthodoxy on financial issues.[26]

Cass's professions of the true Democratic faith did him little good, however, for his cautious silence during the Bank War was well known and his recent flirtation with Rives was widely rumored. Anti-bank Democrats remained prejudiced against him.[27] Even if they had believed him to be sincere, Cass's position would have been little better. He said he was for what Van Buren was for, but he was not for Van Buren. Nor did he enjoy the advantage which Van Buren had, as an anti-bank candidate,

of having been closely associated with, and defeated in 1840 while defending, the party's anti-bank platform.

So, early in 1843, while the Kentucky Democratic state convention renominated Johnson, while Cass toured the Northeast on his way home to Michigan, and while Stewart's candidacy was almost forgotten, Martin Van Buren had little reason to worry about the trio of war heroes who had challenged him.[28] They had thwarted his effort to suppress discussion of the nomination, but they had not materially weakened his chances to win it.

* * *

The hero-candidates had actually done Van Buren an indirect service by undermining the position of Senator James Buchanan of Pennsylvania, a far more dangerous rival than any of them.

Buchanan was the son of a prosperous farmer and businessman, and had had a good education before beginning the study of the law. In 1814 he served briefly in the Army, then was elected as a Federalist to the Pennsylvania legislature. After several years of highly successful law practice, Buchanan was elected, still as a Federalist, to Congress. He remained in the House of Representatives throughout the 1820's, becoming meanwhile a Republican, an advocate of protective tariffs, and a Jackson man. He served as Minister to Russia from 1831 to 1833, and the next year was elected to the United States Senate, where he still remained in 1841.[29] Thus Buchanan had a distinquished record of public service, but his few weeks in uniform during the War of 1812 did not give him the glamor of a Stewart, a Johnson, or a

Cass.

In addition to his experience in high public office, Buchanan claimed a record of devoted service to the Democratic party. After the party in Pennsylvania had split, in 1835, Buchanan had worked hard to re-unite his copartisans and to align them with the Van Buren Administration. He had repeatedly urged Governor David R.Porter, after his election in 1838, further to heal the rift in the party by appointing members of both factions to state offices, and to support President Van Buren and the Independent Treasury. In his own relations with the Magician, Buchanan had been faithful and regular, despite his conviction that Van Buren was not his friend and could not carry Pennsylvania. Buchanan had voted for the Independent Treasury and had campaigned for Van Buren in 1840.[30]

Buchanan had expected that the election of 1840 would end Van Buren's career, that his own magnanimity and regularity would give him a claim on the support of the Van Buren men in Pennsylvania, and that he would also be able to depend on Governor Porter and his faction. Added to his own organization, these two groups would give him control of the Democratic party in his state. And Pennsylvania, with its large electoral college vote, would be be a firm base on which to stand while he contested for the Presidency. But all these hopes were disappointed: Van Buren did not retire, Porter proved to be treacherous, and Buchanan could not control Pennsylvania.

The Senator's response to Van Buren's continued candidacy was prudent. He realized that he could not compete with Van

Buren nationally and that it would be advisable, with reference to the future, to avoid antagonizing the ex-President. So, in the hope that Van Buren would give up when he learned how little popularity he had, or that other candidates would prevent the Magician from being nominated, Buchanan concentrated on Pennsylvania. Even there he did nothing which was openly hostile to Van Buren.[31] If he could get the solid support of one of the largest states in the Union without making himself obnoxious to the Van Buren men, he might yet have a chance for the nomination. If that failed, there would be another time.

As it turned out, Buchanan was not able to control Pennsylvania. Governor Porter never fulfilled his pledge of friendship; his friends on the Canal Board and in other state offices used their patronage to promote the Johnson and Cass movements while Porter, though professing the best feelings toward Buchanan, did nothing. The Senator's friends urged him to break with Porter, but Buchanan patiently waited for the Governor to live up to his promises.[32] Finally, in the spring of 1843, Porter endorsed President John Tyler for re-election; this, coming after a series of intraparty disputes over the patronage, destroyed Porter's influence and removed him as an obstacle to Buchanan's control of the party.[33] But by then a new problem had arisen. Henry A. Muhlenberg, one of the leaders of the factional warfare of 1835, had decided to seek the governorship, and Buchanan's friends were divided in their preferences between him and his chief rival, Francis Shunk. Since the same convention which chose the state's delegation to the national convention would also select the

gubernatorial nominee, the two matters were certain to become entangled, and Buchanan could not take either side in the gubernatorial race without losing friends.[34] He had been wise to confine his campaign to Pennsylvania; the management of the Democrats of that one state was proving to be a fulltime job.

* * *

For President John Tyler, the chief obstacle to becoming the leader of the Democratic party was that he could not get into it. He had been nominated to the Vice Presidency by the Whigs, who had reasoned that his membership in the state rights wing of their party would strengthen their ticket in the South. When Harrison died and he became President, Tyler adhered to the principles which had made him a good vice presidential candidate; while he was willing to repeal the Independent Treasury Act, he vetoed two successive bills to establish some sort of national bank. The Whigs in Congress, led by Henry Clay, responded by reading Tyler out of their party.[35] Some of the Tallmadge-Rives faction, who like Tyler had isolated themselves by opposing both national bank and Independent Treasury, then launched a movement to get Tyler--and themselves--back into the Democratic party. They proposed a re-union, under Tyler's leadership, of "all the original Jackson men of both parties;" that is, that the regular Democrats should give the control of their party to the minority which had left it in 1837 and before, but who were now sorry they had done so.[36] Naturally, the Van Buren men were not interested in any such re-union, and they had the power to prevent it.

To begin with, ex-President Jackson, who still had

great influence on Democrats, ignored the pleas of personal friends among the Tyler men and remained loyal to Van Buren. Secondly, Frank Blair's Washington Globe, from which many rank and file Democrats were accustomed to take the party line, carried on a constant and bitter campaign against Tyler and those who consorted with him. Thirdly, leading Democrats in Congress and out of it, especially the Van Buren men, kept aloof from the President.[37]

In keeping Tyler out of the Democratic party, the Magician's friends were aided by Senator John C. Calhoun of South Carolina. As a state rights Democrat, Calhoun had much in common with Tyler, and many of the President's advisers were old friends of the Carolinian. But Calhoun had rejoined the Democratic party because he favored the Independent Treasury, and so, as long as financial issues were the main ones, Calhoun was little more friendly to Tyler than Van Buren was.[38]

Tyler, in turn, was no more willing to surrender his principles to become a Democrat than to remain a Whig, and he persisted in his conviction that some form of national bank, though not the types he had vetoed, could be constitutionally established, and in his opposition to the Independent Treasury system. Both beliefs were contrary to the Democratic creed. Tyler was further weakened by his lack of prominence prior to his accidental elevation to the Presidency, by his inability to capture the popular imagination, and by his want of talent as a political manager.[39] All he had to offer Democrats as an inducement to support him was his control of the federal patronage.

That was not enough to get him into the Democratic

party, but it did make a problem for the Van Buren men. Many Democrats, because of the economic depression, were willing to take offices from Tyler.[40] If the Van Buren men approved of the acceptance by Democrats of presidential appointments, they encouraged the development of a pro-Tyler faction within the party. But if they criticized the practice, and voted in the Senate to reject presidential appointees who were Democrats, they aroused the opposition to Van Buren of all Democrats who had got or who wanted to get offices from Tyler. So, while the President was not a formidable candidate for the leadership of the Democratic party, his power to fill the federal payroll with Democrats was an obstacle to Van Buren's leadership.

* * *

John C. Calhoun was unwilling to support Tyler not only because he favored the Independent Treasury, but also because he had presidential ambitions of his own. He had had them, in fact, for two decades, and in the early 1840's he believed that his time had finally come.

Calhoun's own connection with the Democratic party had only recently been renewed. Elected Vice President with Jackson in 1828, he had lost out to Van Buren in the rivalry for Jackson's favor and had then left the party and resigned the Vice Presidency to lead his state in the nullification crisis. For a time he cooperated with Clay against Jackson, but he never really became a Whig. After the Panic of 1837 he suddenly returned to the Democratic party as an advocate of the Independent Treasury and the Specie Clause.[41]

Calhoun's independence had weakened him politically. His former Whig allies denounced him as a selfish turncoat who would be loyal to no party which was not a Calhoun party. Some of the state rights men who had followed him out of the Democratic fold had refused to return to it when he did; even in South Carolina he had had a hard fight to carry his organization with him in 1837.[42] Many regular Democrats, South as well as North, distrusted him, fearing that he had rejoined their party only in order to dominate it and that if he could not do so he would disrupt it.[43]

It was typical of Calhoun that he ignored the jibes of the Whigs and the suspicions of the Democrats. He completely identified himself and his presidential ambitions with the principles he advocated, and so had no consciousness of selfishness. He could talk grandly of his devotion to the cause and lack of personal ambition and then, without a trace of embarrassment, begin to speculate about his chances to be elected President.[44]

It was also quite in character for Calhoun to believe that his chances were quite good, for he was an optimist. He believed that politics was basicly a contest between right and wrong and that the right was bound to prevail; though he experienced a succession of setbacks, he rebounded from each with renewed enthusiasm and determination. He was particularly optimistic in the early 1840's because he had convinced himself that, during Van Buren's Administration, circumstances had forced the Democratic party to deliver itself into his hands. They had not wanted to do so, Calhoun believed, but the "plunder and humbug"

faction, of which Van Buren was the leader, had been compelled to espouse the true state rights doctrine in order to save themselves. Consequently, before the election of 1840 Calhoun had expected to be the leader of the party and its nominee in 1844 whether Van Buren won or lost his bid for re-election.[45] Calhoun had continued in this opinion after Van Buren's defeat; Henry Clay's leadership of the Whigs in Congress and the repeal of the Independent Treasury Act would, he believed, keep the Democratic party on the defensive and committed to his principles.[46]

By the fall of 1841 Calhoun's optimism was, however, being weakened. The quarrel between Tyler and the Clay Whigs during the special session of Congress that summer had shattered the opposition; there was, therefore, danger that the Democrats, feeling certain of victory in 1844, would abandon the state rights platform. Calhoun was also alarmed by Van Buren's refusal to retire after his defeat. So, early in October, 1841, the South Carolinian began prompting his friends to action in his behalf. He was afraid that, unless the contest for the Democratic nomination was begun at once, the Magician would succeed in forestalling public opinion.[47]

Despite his alarm, Calhoun remained basically optimistic; he was confident that at his signal the state rights men of the nation, and especially of the South, would launch a spirited campaign for his nomination. Again he was disappointed, for he had trouble even getting his campaign started.

Calhoun hoped that the Democrats in the Georgia legislature would take the first step by proclaiming him their choice

for the Presidency. The response of such friends as Wilson Lumpkin, former Georgia Governor and Senator, was at first encouraging, but after visiting the capital and conferring with other leaders of the party, Lumpkin told Calhoun that it was too soon to begin the campaign. Three members of the state rights faction in Georgia were candidates in an approaching congressional election and, because there was already jealousy between them and the Unionist or Van Buren Democrats, the Calhoun men had decided not to raise any new, divisive issue. It would take more time, they warned Calhoun, to unite Georgia Democrats in his support.[48]

At the session of Congress which began in December, 1841, and which Calhoun attended as a Senator, his friends convinced him that the Georgians were right, and he agreed to postpone his campaign for a while.[49] Not until the spring of 1842 did he try again, this time in North Carolina. The plan was for his supporters in that state to endorse him at a mass meeting in Salisbury in May, which had been called to ratify the gubernatorial nomination made by a state convention in January. Romulus M. Saunders, a prominent North Carolina Democrat, would launch the movement in a letter to the meeting recommending Calhoun's nomination.

Saunders's letter was read to the Salisbury meeting but, as in Georgia, nothing was done. Some Democratic leaders friendly to Van Buren objected to the proposed nomination and, rather than risk an open fight in the meeting and a rift in the party which might handicap their candidate for Governor, Calhoun's North Carolina managers backed down. State rights Democrats in

North Carolina, like their colleagues in Georgia, were more interested in winning their state election than in advancing Calhoun's presidential candidacy.[50]

* * *

Thus, although Van Buren and his friends had not been able entirely to suppress the discussion of the 1844 presidential nomination, none of his rivals had made any appreciable progress prior to the fall of 1842. Realizing that he could not lead the party in the way that Jackson had, the Magician had sought to prevent anyone else from trying to do so. This showed his good judgment; he recognized his own weakness.[51] But it also revealed his lack of imagination. It had not occurred to him that the party badly needed leadership and that some type of leadership other than that which Jackson had provided might be devised. The Magician had been protected, however, by a similar lack of perception on the part of his competitors.

Indeed, most of them were even less perceptive, for, except for Buchanan, Van Buren's rivals had acted as though each of them was another Jackson who, by sheer force of personality and popularity, could gather up the party around him and carry it to victory. Since none of them was any better able than the Magician to do that, he had suffered nothing but anxiety by the failure of his effort to suppress their candidacies.

Van Buren's competitors had made another mistake. None of them but Tyler had based his candidacy on a platform which was clearly distinquishable from the one with which Van Buren was so closely associated, while Tyler had opposed that platform and

thus enabled the Van Buren men to exclude him from the party. The result was that, after more than a year of sporadic campaigning in which he had taken no active part, Van Buren remained by far the strongest candidate for the nomination because the party remained committed to the platform which Jackson and he had given it.[52]

He could retain that advantage, however, only if the financial issues of the 1830's remained the chief public questions of the 1840's. If new issues were raised, to which Van Buren's responses would not have the sanctity of being those which Jackson had made and which the party had repeatedly endorsed, he would stand on a more nearly equal footing with the other candidates. Consequently, Henry D. Gilpin of Philadelphia, one of the Magician's most faithful and intelligent friends, expressed a main theme of Van Buren's strategy when he announced his own determination "to keep to the true issue"--by which he meant the Independent Treasury and Van Buren against the Bank of the United States and Henry Clay --"and not to make new ones . . ." In this way, Gilpin assurred the Magician, they could "make that right which had been put wrong . . ."[53]

But to determine which issues were discussed, Van Buren had to be able to control his rivals. And the failure of his effort to postpone the contest for the Democratic presidential nomination until it would be too late for anyone else to win it had already demonstrated that he could not do that.

## CHAPTER IV

## CALHOUN'S CHALLENGE

"I am for driving all who are for a tariff of protection out of our ranks entirely."
F. W. Pickens of South Carolina, November 8, 1842[1]

"I have little confidence in some of the followers of Mr. Calhoun . . . If they cannot dictate and control, they oppose."
Robert McClellan of New York, February 4, 1843[2]

Unable to prevent discussion of the Democratic presidential nomination, Martin Van Buren decided late in 1842 to try to hurry the party into an early national convention before his rivals could develop greater strength or form a combination against him. In November, a year-old letter by Van Buren to a friend in Philadelphia was printed in the newspapers to dispel any doubt that the Little Magician would accept a third nomination. About the same time Van Buren's supporters began to call for the Democratic national convention to meet in November, 1843. The Magician's still hunt had been disturbed by the hallooing of his eager rivals, but he and his friends were closing in on the game, hoping for a quick kill.[3]

Despite the unenthusiastic responses to their earlier efforts, Van Buren's competitors had not given up. Especially active was John C. Calhoun, who had had little success thus far

but who had considerable potential strength in the South and West because of his prominence as an opponent of protective tariffs.

* * *

The tariff issue had not been in the forefront of national politics since 1833, when the Compromise Tariff Act had been passed. That act had set rates of taxation on imports for nearly a decade, providing a gradual reduction to relatively non-protective levels. By 1841, with economic activity at the very bottom of the deep trough into which it had been sliding since 1837, dissatisfaction with the Compromise was developing in the North, and Henry Clay and his Whig supporters were arguing that, since the provisions of the Compromise Act were about to expire, some new settlement of the tariff question must be made.[4]

The upshot was a bitter legislative struggle in the session of Congress which began in December, 1841. At the previous special session the Whig majority had enacted a law providing for the distribution of federal land revenues among the states, but only on condition that no tariff duty be set higher than the final maximum allowed by the Compromise Act. Now Clay and his associates tried to raise the tariff higher than that without stopping the distribution of the land revenues, but they were thwarted by two successive presidential vetoes. Their response was to offer a bill which sharply raised tariff duties without continuing distribution. Many western Whigs would not support this bill, but in the House of Representatives a score of Democrats voted for it and it passed. In the Senate the result was the same; the votes of four Democrats--Sherrod Williams of Maine, James Buchanan and

Daniel Sturgeon of Pennsylvania, and Silas Wright of New York--secured the passage of the Whig tariff bill, which President John Tyler then signed.[5]

Williams, Buchanan, and Sturgeon were known protectionists, so their votes were not surprising.[6] But Wright had professed opposition to protection ever since 1833. Furthermore, he was the manager of Van Buren's presidential candidacy. Consequently, his vote for the Tariff of 1842 created a political sensation.

In a speech explaining his vote, Wright did his best to blunt its effects on himself and on Van Buren. Referring to his part in the authorship and passage of the Tariff of 1828, which had set off the nullification crisis, Wright called it a youthful error. Since then he had been, and he still remained, opposed to setting tariff rates any higher than was necessary to support an economical administration of the government. He voted for the present bill, he said, only as the lesser evil: if it failed to pass, distribution would continue and the government would be left penniless. Wright added that he made this sacrifice of his principles only to protect the public creditors and because he was confident that the next Congress would be Democratic and would reduce the tariff to a proper level. But Wright's main point was that his vote for the bill was his own; he denied that he had discussed it with Van Buren or anyone else.[7]

Wright's apology for his action failed to satisfy even some of his friends,[8] and the state rights Democrats who supported Calhoun called it hypocritical and false. Recalling

that Van Buren and Wright had arranged the passage of the Tariff of 1828, they raged at this "second betrayal" of the South by the same men.[9] And they became still more angry when the Albany Argus and the New York Democratic state convention of September, 1842, defended and even praised Wright's vote. The Calhoun men believed that Edwin Croswell, editor of the Argus, published only what Van Buren told him to publish and that the New York convention, too, had been under the Magician's complete control. Hence Wright had lied, Van Buren had dictated his vote, and the Magician was as much a protectionist as Henry Clay.[10]

Prompted by their leader, the Calhoun men demanded that the Tariff of 1842 be repealed and the Compromise Act be restored by the next Congress. If this was not done, they warned, they would have to reconsider their adherence to the Democratic party. In private, Calhoun talked of setting up a third party at once.[11] If he had his way, the tariff, rather than the Independent Treasury, would be the main issue in the election of 1844.

* * *

The response of the Calhoun men to Wright's vote for the tariff angered many of Van Buren's friends, who had long suspected that the Carolinian would try to break up the party unless he got its presidential nomination. They looked upon the agitation of the tariff issue as an effort to destroy the Magician, for it was a dangerous question for any northern Democrat to discuss, and Van Buren's candidacy was peculiarly connected with other issues. Having been successful, up to the fall of 1842, in keeping the party committed to "the principles of Jefferson, Jackson, and

Van Buren," the Magician's friends were now demanding the vindication of those principles by the renomination and re-election of the man who had been defeated with them in 1840. Formerly they had argued that "principles, not men," must be the party's watchword; but now that they were openly contesting for the nomination, they asserted that adherence to the party's principles required the renomination of Van Buren. Those who emphasized other principles, or who promoted any other candidate were, the Van Buren men implied, traitors to the Democratic party.[12]

The increasing bitterness between the supporters of the Magician and the state rights Democrats showed itself during December, 1842, in the election of a United States Senator by the North Carolina legislature. The Democratic incumbent, Bedford Brown, was renominated by the Democratic caucus, but the Calhoun Democrats in the legislature would not support him because he was a Van Buren man. Instead they voted for Romulus M. Saunders, one of their own faction, and deadlocked the election. The struggle became a nasty one, and Brown was so provoked that he publicly quoted a very deprecatory remark which Van Buren had once made about Saunders. While the Democrats squabbled, the Whigs began to vote for Saunders in the hope of deepening the schism in the Democracy. His election by a coalition of Whigs and Calhoun Democrats was prevented only by the last minute nomination of William H. Haywood, a kindly, popular man who obtained all the Democratic votes.[13]

The contest left a bad taste in the mouths of the Van Buren men. Instead of congratulating themselves on the fact that Haywood was inclined toward Van Buren, they grumbled about the way

Brown had been treated, and predicted that Van Buren would have to face the same sort of opposition from within the party in the presidential election.[14] Now each faction felt betrayed by the other.

* * *

At about the same time as the intraparty quarrels over Wright's vote for the tariff bill and the North Carolina senatorial election, the Calhoun men launched a campaign to reform the national convention method of nominating presidential candidates. They charged that Van Buren and his minions were conspiring to forestall his competitors by holding the convention too soon, and that the Magician would control it by having its members selected by state conventions, where corrupt deals with office-hungry politicians would prevent the expression of the popular will. They also objected to the "unit rule"--under which the majority of a state delegation cast its entire vote in a national convention--which, they said, gave the political bosses of a few large states the power to dictate the nomination. To avoid these evils, the Calhounites demanded two reforms. First, they insisted that the national convention meet no earlier than May, 1844, so that the people would have time to consider the merits of all the candidates. Second, they demanded that the delegates to the convention be elected and instructed by the people themselves, by congressional districts, and that each delegate vote independently in the convention. This would allow a minority within a state to be represented and prevent a few large states from controlling the nomination.[15]

Van Buren was vulnerable to the charges on which the

demand for these reforms was based because of his notoriety as an alleged manipulator of politicians, caucuses and conventions. It was on just such charges that he and his faction had been defeated in 1824, and his opponents had made much use of similar themes in the elections of 1832, 1836, and 1840. But the Calhounite plan for a late, popularly elected national convention posed another, more serious threat to the Magician: even in states where the bulk of the party favored his renomination, Van Buren could lose a substantial number of delegates if Calhoun's plan, or some variation on it, was adopted; and even in such states it might be adopted.

The danger that it would be adopted arose out of the fact that, in many states, the chief business of the state convention would be the selection of candidates for state offices; the choice of national convention delegates would be a side issue. Participants in struggles over the state offices might be tempted to gain strength by making deals involving the national convention. Outright repudiation of Van Buren might not be dared, but it would not be necessary; if the choice of national convention delegates was simply referred to the people or to the congressional district conventions, the Magician would probably lose delegates in states where he had the support of the majority of Democrats.

Soon after Congress met, in December, 1842, Robert Barnwell Rhett of South Carolina published a lengthy argument for the proposed reforms.[16] Rhett was the wrong author for a theme so rich in demagogic possibilities, but even his turgid rhetoric could not conceal the potential popularity of Calhoun's plan for

democratizing the Democratic party. By joining these proposals to the attack on Van Buren as a protectionist in disguise, Calhoun had given himself a strong platform on which to stand while contesting with Van Buren for the leadership of the party.

* * *

Van Buren's friends generally believed that the outcry of the state rights Democrats about the tariff and their effort to reform the national convention were intended to furnish excuses for them to bolt the party if Calhoun was not nominated.[17] Some of the Magician's advisers were eager to provoke them to an immediate departure from the Democratic camp,[18] but the majority of those who counseled Van Buren on the subject, including some Democrats who were not closely identified either with Van Buren or with Calhoun, urged conciliation. Even Frank Blair, no friend to Calhoun, felt that way. In response to Rhett's pamphlet, the Washington Globe proposed that the Democratic Senators and Congressmen meet in caucus to decide a time and place for the national convention, thus harmonizing the party.[19]

To Senator Silas Wright, however, the most important thing was to make the presidential nomination before December, 1843, when the new Congress would meet. That Congress was expected to be Democratic. If it spent its time in President-making instead of legislating, Wright feared, there would be such a popular reaction that no man the party nominated could be elected. And if the national convention had not met before Congress did, would not the Democratic members of Congress see in every piece of legislation an opportunity to advance one candidate or embarrass another? Were

not the Calhoun men already trying to make such a use of the tariff issue? Wright was very anxious about such dangers and, since he was convinced that a congressional caucus would try to conciliate the state rights Democrats by postponing the national convention, he was determined to prevent the adoption of Blair's proposal.[20]

Wright's strongest argument was that, at such a meeting as Blair had suggested, the Calhounites would not only insist on postponing the convention, but would also demand that its members be elected by districts and vote individually. Since the majority of Democratic Congressmen and Senators would not even consider the latter demand, there would be no agreement. The caucus which was called to unite the party, Wright argued, would be the occasion of its disruption.

Wright preferred to leave the whole matter to the state conventions. The Democrats of Virginia were to meet early in March. As the immediate heirs of Thomas Jefferson they had great influence; if they favored an early national convention and insisted on choosing their delegates as they pleased, other states would follow their lead. Thus the Calhoun men would be defeated piecemeal--in Virginia in March, in New Hampshire in June, in New York and Massachusetts in September. This would reduce the likelihood that they would bolt the party, for by the time they were certain that they would not get their way, they would see how weak they were, and some of them would have committed themselves to obey the decision of their state convention. Further, Congress would then no longer be in session, which would make it harder for

the Calhoun men to act together.

Wright's arguments against holding a caucus were decisive with the Van Buren men in Congress, but talk about such a meeting did not stop. Some other Democrats, frightened by the bitter contest in North Carolina, were so afraid of a split in the party that they convinced themselves that a caucus would somehow make everything right. Their fears were increased by the action of the Democratic members of the Maryland legislature, who in February, 1843, resolved in favor of Calhoun's plan for a late, popularly elected national convention.[21]

One of the worried Democrats was Senator Robert J. Walker of Mississippi. When he learned of the Maryland resolutions he went to Wright to argue that a caucus must be held to prevent the disruption of the party. At first Wright was suspicious of Walker. He had heard rumors, as yet unproved, that Walker favored Calhoun; he had also felt a certain coolness in Walker's manner since the settlement of a large debt which the Mississippian had owed Van Buren. But after the two men had talked for some time, Wright became convinced of Walker's sincerity. Because of this, and because of Walker's influence in the party and in the Senate, Wright could not simply reject his plea for a caucus; but Wright was determined not to have one, with its dangers of surrender to Calhoun, or disruption of the party, or both, and so he resorted to a clever scheme.

Wright reminded Walker that, if a caucus met, other subjects than the time and place of the national convention would be brought up. Walker admitted this, and added that the Democrats

of Mississippi would not let anyone tell them how to choose their national convention delegates, or how their delegates were to vote. Wright then suggested that Walker and Senator Benjamin Tappan of Ohio, a Van Buren man, should draw up a circular letter to be signed by every Democrat in Congress except those from New York. The letter would specify the time and place of the national convention, but it would also provide that each state choose and regulate its own delegates in its own way. If there was general agreement on this method of settling the disputes about the convention, Wright pledged, New York Democrats would accept whatever was decided. But, he added, if there was any serious objection to it, the circular letter must be abandoned and there must be no more talk about a caucus.

Wright's suggestion was a shrewd one. His object was still to prevent a caucus, both because it would postpone the convention and because the Calhoun men might nevertheless persist in their other demands and break up both caucus and party. If he was right in his suspicion that the Calhoun men would insist on having their way on all the issues they had raised, there would be so much objection to the circular letter that, under the terms of his agreement with Walker, both it and the caucus would be dropped. If the Calhoun men did sign the circular, Wright would still have gained a victory over the district system of choosing delegates without disrupting the party, but at the cost of having the convention postponed. That was a risk, but one he felt obliged to take.

Senator Walker accepted Wright's proposal, and he and Tappan, who had been called into the conference, went off to draw

up the circular letter. As it turned out, Wright's gamble paid off, for nothing further was heard of either the letter or the caucus. Both the Van Buren and the Calhoun factions thereafter looked to the state conventions, especially the Virginia convention, to settle the disputes about the national convention. Wright had won the first round for Van Buren.[22]

* * *

While the politicians in Washington worried about the national convention, Virginia Democrats were more concerned about the other issue Calhoun had made, the tariff. During the fall of 1842 the state's Democratic press, in editorials, and the party's local leaders, in stump speeches and resolutions, denounced the Tariff of 1842 and called for its repeal or revision by the next Congress. Thomas Ritchie, in the Richmond Enquirer, dealt gently with Wright and the other Democrats who had voted for the law, but warned that Virginia Democrats would hold them to their pledges to change it. The Calhoun press was not so polite, and Van Buren's Virginia friends were embarrassed by its continual harping on the endorsement of Wright's vote by the New York Democratic convention.[23] So great was their discomfiture, and so insistent were their calls on Van Buren for a statement of his own opinion of the tariff, that he finally gave them one. In February, 1843, just before the Virginia convention, Van Buren wrote to a friend in the state that he disapproved of the Tariff of 1842 both in principle and detail. This letter was of good service to his friends at the Virginia convention, for it implied that he wished to see the existing tariff not merely amended but repealed.[24]

Aside from the tariff question, the biggest problem for the Van Buren Democrats in Virginia was the refusal of Thomas Ritchie openly to favor the Magician. Ritchie explained that he wanted to preserve the unity of the party until after the spring elections, and he promised that he would eventually come out for Van Buren. But both Van Buren men and Calhounites suspected that the real motive for his neutrality was his desire to get his friend Andrew Stevenson nominated to the Vice Presidency--that he was waiting for Van Buren to offer something tangible in exchange for the support of the Enquirer.[25]

To make up for the neutrality of Ritchie and his paper, Governor James McDowell, Congressman George C. Dromgoole, John Letcher, and other Virginia Van Buren men worked all the harder, and when the state convention met they were well prepared. The Calhoun men were allowed to control the resolutions committee, which reported resolutions favoring all of Calhoun's reform proposals. But on the floor of the convention the Van Buren men showed their strength and rejected both the committee report and Ritchie's compromise proposal that the national convention meet in January, 1844. Instead the majority favored November, 1843, and insisted on the application of the unit rule to Virginia's delegation. In response to the threats of the Calhoun men that they would not take part in such a national convention, the Virginia convention further resolved that any man, however prominent, who refused to abide by the decisions of a fairly constituted national convention would forfeit the confidence of the party.[26]

This was precisely the result which Senator Wright had

hoped for, and in anticipation of which he had prevented any action by the Democrats in Congress on the subject of the national convention. Virginia had won the second round for Van Buren. If other states followed her lead, Van Buren would be nominated before the next Congress met and all would be well.

While Wright rejoiced, Calhoun was furious. Before the Virginia convention he had been optimistic, certain that he and his cause would triumph. His scheme for reforming the national convention would, he believed, fulfill the intentions of the Founding Fathers by depriving the large states of the power both to nominate and to elect the President. Because the small states would thereby gain in influence, he was sure they would endorse his plan. And because the large northern states were the centers of "consolidationist" sentiment, while Virginia was the traditional citadel of state rights, he had expected the Old Dominion, despite its size, to lead the reform movement. The defeat of his friends in the Virginia convention--which, ironically, he blamed entirely on Ritchie--exasperated Calhoun. South Carolina, he told his friends, would never consent to participate in a national convention organized on such corrupt principles as those endorsed by Virginia. If South Carolina did surrender, he added, he would not; he would fight on, alone if necessary, for the reform of politics and the restoration of the Union conceived by the authors of the Constitution.[27] Van Buren and his friends would not have been so happy about their victory in Virginia if they had known how close it had come to disrupting the Democratic party.

* * *

Van Buren's candidacy required that he keep aloof from unseemly political activity, and his isolation at his home near Kinderhook, New York, also prevented him from taking a hand in the dispute over the national convention. But if he could not play a major part in deciding how the Democratic party was to be organized and governed, he could quite properly, and despite his removal from the scenes of active politics, attend to matters of public policy. To do so was also in keeping with his strategy of depending upon his principles, upon his connection with the Democratic platform, to secure for him the presidential nomination. So, while Wright and the Virginia Democrats were trying to block Calhoun's plan to reform the national convention, the Magician wrestled with the tariff question. His Virginia letter on the subject had been intended only for private circulation at the Virginia convention; for general publication he was preparing a more elaborate statement in the form of a reply to the Indiana Democratic state convention of January, 1843, which had asked all of the presidential candidates a series of questions about the principal political issues.[28]

John Law, an Indianapolis politician who was one of Van Buren's most faithful friends in the Northwest, was the originator of the questionnaire. Several of the questions dealt with the financial issues on which Van Buren depended so much and on which Law expected Lewis Cass to quibble. The last question, which asked each candidate whether he would promise to support the nominee of the Democratic national convention, was aimed at Calhoun. But the most important question, because of the controversy

which had arisen since August, was about the tariff. The Indiana convention had given Van Buren an opportunity to prove that he was not a protectionist, but had challenged him to do so without antagonizing those northern Democrats who were protectionists.

Van Buren fully understood the importance of his replies to the Indiana convention, and so he drafted them with great care. As he completed each of them he sent it to Wright to read; Wright, in turn, consulted Senator Benton, who was a diligent researcher and had a great amount of factual knowledge. The chairman of the Indiana committee which was to publish the replies also helped Van Buren by reporting to him how his rivals had replied, as their responses were received in Indiana.

Van Buren's caution was so great that it embarrassed both him and the committee. By the end of February, six weeks after the Indiana convention, Calhoun, Buchanan, Johnson, and Cass had all responded, and soon afterwards Cass began to inquire why his answers had not been published. Van Buren had not yet completed his first draft. Cass's friends began to ask why it took a man of principle so long to say what his principles were, and the chairman of the publication committee begged the Magician to hurry. Finally, early in April, the committee sent the replies of the other candidates to the printer. Van Buren's answers, in the form of a pamphlet which was falsely dated February 15, were already in the mail, but could not be published in Indiana until late in April.

What Van Buren lacked in promptness he made up in skill: his opinions on the tariff were contrived to satisfy almost everyone. He began by agreeing with the resolution of the Indiana

convention in favor of "A discriminating tariff for revenue only, and which will incidentally protect American interests." But, Van Buren added, the terms employed had been used in many senses, so he would explain his meaning.

He then argued that an import tax of twenty-five per cent ad valorem would give manufacturers all the protection they could reasonably ask, considering that the cost of shipment from Europe to America was an additional bar to imports, and as much protection as they could practically enjoy in any case. If tariffs were set higher, domestic competition would be stimulated by the inordinately high profits of the protected enterprises. Since Americans generally agreed that a tariff of twenty-five per cent was necessary to produce enough revenue to support the government, there should be no difficulty in settling the question on that basis.

But what of discrimination? Ought some duties to be set higher, and others lower, than twenty-five per cent? Van Buren said that there might be, that there indeed ought to be, some variation, but never for the sole purpose of discouraging imports except in the case of goods essential to national defence. Otherwise, discrimination for the purpose of protecting American producers from foreign competition would benefit them at too great a cost to other Americans, which was unjust, politically unwise, and dangerous to the Union. But discrimination could and should be practiced for other purposes: to prevent smuggling, to prevent loss of revenue on items which could not bear such a high tax, to facilitate the importation of scientific and educational materials, and

--most important of all--to make the system of taxation progressive in its effect.

In an argument aimed at the poorer voter, the Magician maintained that discrimination for this last purpose was "demanded by considerations of justice, humanity, and sound policy." If the rich man did not have to pay tariff duties, he would pay direct taxes on his lands, stocks, jewelry, plate, and coach. But the poor man had no such consolation; only when the government was supported by imposts did he bear any considerable part of the burden. Discrimination in his favor, by reducing the duties on necessities and raising the duties on luxuries which only the rich could afford, was therefore essential if the tariff was to conform to the principle of taxation in accordance with wealth.

To manufacturers, Van Buren addressed one last plea for common sense. If they asked too much, they would only arouse opposition and keep the tariff dispute alive. Nothing, he reminded them, was so bad for business as agitation and uncertainty about the future. Since twenty-five per cent was all the protection they could use, and probably all they could get and keep, let them be content with it.[29]

This was a comprehensive and clever statement on a complicated issue; it appeared to be candid and specific, yet there was not a tariff bill which Congress was likely to pass which could not have been reconciled with it. Van Buren had boldly come out in favor of principles with which almost all Americans would agree, and then, by analyzing every aspect of the subject, had opened up enough loopholes to please most of those who disagreed with his

general principles. Uncompromising free traders like Calhoun, who insisted on taxing every import at exactly the same rate, were not pleased with Van Buren's Indiana letter; but almost all other Democrats could find in it a platform on the tariff issue on which they could stand.[30] The Magician had met Calhoun's challenge on the tariff as effectively as his friends had outmaneuvered the state rights faction in the Virginia convention.

* * *

Silas Wright was also engaged, during the spring of 1843, in the preparation of an important publication. It was essential that the Democrats of New York endorse the action of the Virginians in regard to the national convention. Since New York's own convention would not meet until September, the endorsement had to be made by the Democratic members of the legislature, in the address to the voters which they customarily issued at the end of each session. But the Democratic legislators were so badly divided that neither faction was likely to accept any address which was satisfactory to the other. Wright, whose recent re-election to the Senate was one of the few occasions when the two factions had acted together, was trying to draft an address which both groups would sign.[31]

Although the chief purpose of the address was to approve the action of the Virginia Democrats and thereby to advance Van Buren's presidential candidacy, it was not the presidential race or any other national matter which divided the New York Democrats. True, a few of them, who hoped to get federal offices from President Tyler, were trying to embarrass Van Buren by preventing

agreement on an address.[32] But the real difficulty was an intra-party dispute over state offices and state financial policy which had been developing for many years.

Van Buren and Wright, by means of cajolery, patience, and careful impartiality, and with the aid of Comptroller Azariah C. Flagg and ex-Governor William L. Marcy, had kept the party reasonably well united during the last two years of Van Buren's Presidency and on through the state election of 1842, when the Democrats had elected William S. Bouck to the Governorship.[33] Then, in the session of the legislature which began in January, 1843, the accumulated jealousies and hatreds of the previous decade had broken out in a series of nasty squabbles. Instead of following Van Buren's advice to adhere to the stringent financial policy adopted by the previous legislature, Governor Bouck had recommended a very slight renewal of spending on canal construction and the "Radical" or "Barnburner" Democrats, who had sponsored the policy of retrenchment and taxation, had at once decided that Bouck was a traitor to the party. Next came a long and unpleasant contest over the election of the State Printer. At the same time, disputes about local offices revealed a general dissatisfaction with Bouck's handling of the patronage and further excaberated the feelings of the two factions toward each other. Secretary of State Samuel Young aroused still more bitterness by implying that some of the state's bonds had been issued illegally and ought not to be paid. Things got so bad that Van Buren himself visited Albany to try to conciliate the quarrelling legislators, but without success. Many Democrats feared that the breach in their party was irreparable,

and that no address could be agreed upon.[34]

A. C. Flagg and a few other leaders had, however, kept their tempers well enough to see the need for agreement and when Wright arrived in Albany in March, 1843, after Congress had adjourned, they were ready to aid him in the work of pacification. After conferring with party leaders in Albany, Wright went on to his home in Canton to draft the address, while Flagg sought to harmonize the Democrats at the capital. To aid Flagg, Wright sent Preston King, the congressman from his district; and at Van Buren's suggestion Samuel Young, who had done much to divide the party, was also brought into the effort to re-unite it. Flagg's strategy was to let the opposing factions quarrel without restraint about both legislation and offices; if their hatreds were given free play on these subjects, Flagg hoped, they would be more willing to agree on the address.[35] The hope of uniting the party on state issues, which was admittedly faint in any case, was thus sacrificed, at the risk of defeat in the state elections of 1843 and 1844, in order to get the Democratic legislators to speak together on a subject about which they did not really disagree, the national convention. Van Buren's inability, during his Presidency, to discipline rebellious Democrats--even in his own state--was a cause of the situation which forced him and his aides to make such an unpleasant choice.

When Wright's draft of the address arrived at Albany, the two factions began to quibble over the references in it to state financial policy, which Wright had made as brief and as ambiguous as he could, and at first it appeared that Flagg had failed in his part of the work. But finally his patience and cleverness bore

fruit. An even more vague reference to canal-building was contrived and all the Democratic legislators signed the address and adopted a resolution recommending Van Buren's election to the Presidency.[36] The rift in the party had been bridged once more, and Van Buren had won another victory--but in a battle he should not have had to fight.

* * *

With the support of the Democrats of New York and Virginia, the same two states which had led the party of Jefferson and in which the Crawford Radicals had stood to the last for the preservation of that party, Van Buren faced the challenge of John C. Calhoun. But the decision between the two candidates was to be made, Van Buren and his advisers had decided, not by a congressional caucus or by any other body which spoke for the party as a whole, but by the state parties. By raising issues about the manner of organizing and conducting the national convention, Calhoun had appealed to the Democratic parties in the states; at the insistence of Wright, the Magician's friends had decided to meet Calhoun's challenge in the arenas he had chosen--the state conventions.

They hoped thereby to commit the state parties to Van Buren's renomination before any body representing the party nationally could assemble. Thus they would defeat Calhoun's friends so gradually that they would not bolt, while preventing Calhoun and Van Buren's other rivals from having a chance to combine against him. Since Van Buren could not command the party nationally, his friends were determined that the state parties be

given no opportunity to consult and act together until Van Buren had the presidential nomination in his grasp, lest the state parties form a new national party with Martin Van Buren left out.

## CHAPTER V

## VAN BUREN AND THE VACUUM IN THE PARTY

> " . . . I have never known such a general spirit of uncertainty and indecision as [is now] witnessed in all quarters. One hardly knows where to look for efficient aid or even decided opinions either about measures or men."
> Henry D. Gilpin,
> November 5, 1843[1]

During 1843 the Democratic party finally felt the full effect of the vacuum left within it by Andrew Jackson's retirement from active politics six years before. Until then the lack of the magnetic force by which Jackson had held the party together had been made up by circumstances--the immediate political effects of the Panic of 1837 and then the control of Congress and the Presidency by the Whigs after the election of 1840--which had forced the party together from without. By early 1843, however, Democrats could see that the conflict between President John Tyler and Senator Henry Clay had greatly weakened the opposition, and that they would control the next Congress and have a good chance to regain the Presidency in 1844. With the prospect of victory before them, Democrats discovered that they had no leader and, what was worse, that they might not be able to agree on one.

The response of most Democrats to the realization that their party was a mere shell, too fragile to stand a shock,

was cautious: their desire to fill the vacuum of leadership was overcome by their fear that any attempt to do so might, by arousing opposition within the party, destroy it.

* * *

The hesitancy of Democrats to commit themselves or to try to commit their party on the presidential question had been displayed as early as January, 1843, by the Indiana and Illinois Democratic state conventions. Although men who professed friendship to Van Buren claimed to control both conventions, neither of them made a presidential nomination or took a firm stand against Calhoun's proposals to reform the national convention. The Indiana meeting did call for an early national convention, but in both states the congressional district conventions were given a voice in the selection of national convention delegates. In Illinois this was done, Van Buren's friends there explained, to conciliate the Calhoun men in the South; in Indiana the supporters of Lewis Cass insisted on it and, with a state election approaching, the Van Buren men gave in for the sake of party unity.[2]

In Ohio, too, party leaders who were closely associated with Van Buren decided not to act on the presidential question in the session of the legislature which met in the winter of 1842-1843; they had their hands full dealing with a rebellion within the party against the anti-banking policies to which they had committed it. Mississippi Democrats were equally wary of involvement in the presidential race at their state convention in February. The year before they had nominated Van Buren, but this time they decided by a large majority to make no presidential

nomination. Divided by disputes over state issues and by rivalries among their leaders, they were afraid to risk defeat in their state election by raising any new issue within the party. About the same time, the Maryland legislative caucus endorsed all the proposals of the Calhoun men for postponement and reform of the national convention; but, like the Virginia convention which soon afterwards insisted on an early convention and on the unit rule, the Maryland Democrats made no presidential nomination.[3]

Van Buren and his close associates had hoped that the address of the New York Democratic legislators, coming on the heels of the Virginia convention, would put an end to the discussion of Calhoun's plans for the national convention. They were disappointed. The Massachusetts Democratic legislative caucus did endorse Van Buren and denounce the attempts of the Calhoun men to force their ideas on the party; but it also resolved in favor of postponing the national convention and adopted a form of the district system for the selection of the Massachusetts delegation. The Connecticut caucus failed, by a tie vote, to recommend any date for the national convention. Many Van Buren men, fearing loss of popularity if they insisted on an early convention, voted with his opponents on the question.[4]

The greatest disappointment to the Van Buren men came in New Hampshire, where Governor Edmund Burke had been confident of controlling the state convention, in early June, for the Magician. To Burke's astonishment, Senator Levi Woodbury and other Calhoun men took command of the convention and passed resolutions in favor of a late national convention and for the use of

the district system for the choice of delegates.[5] Because New Hampshire had long been a Democratic state and therefore possessed an influence in the North somewhat like that of Virginia in the South, and because Woodbury had been a member of Van Buren's Cabinet, this was a great victory for Calhoun and a chilling setback to the Magician's hopes of putting an early end to the contest for the presidential nomination.

The New Hampshire action finally convinced Van Buren and Wright that the national convention would have to be postponed to May, 1844, as Calhoun demanded. Even before the jolting news from New Hampshire, the Magician and his campaign manager had begun to suspect that they would have to give in, not because the state rights faction was strong enough to prevail, but because Van Buren's friends were unwilling to make a fight on the issue. When the Democratic legislative caucus in Pennsylvania had resolved for a late convention, for example, Henry D. Gilpin had told Van Buren that there was nothing to be done about it and that it would do no harm to make such a small concession for the sake of harmony. George Bancroft, Van Buren's leading supporter in Massachusetts, also favored yielding the point; in May, 1843, he bluntly told the Magician that an early national convention could not be held.[6]

In the face of this and other evidence that their friends in other states would not support them on the issue, Van Buren and Wright discussed the subject by mail during May. By the end of the month Wright was ready to give up the struggle, but at a loss to know how to go about surrendering. The Virginia Democrats would have to be persuaded to back down and--this was the

real problem--so would the truculent Senator Benton of Missouri. Benton had often criticized Wright for being timid, and he was filled with suspicion of and antagonism toward Calhoun. Wright feared that Benton would never consent to postpone the national convention.[7]

It was, therefore, with some relief that Wright learned of what had happened in New Hampshire. The time of the national convention, he thought, was set. Even as Wright reached this conclusion, Thomas Ritchie's Richmond Enquirer and the Charleston Mercury, which spoke for the Calhoun men, were coming, through an exchange of editorials, to an understanding that if the national convention was postponed, the state rights Democrats would not insist on the choice of delegates by the district system.[8] The dispute over when to nominate a presidential candidate was ended.

But if Wright and Van Buren had reason to congratulate themselves on their extrication from the annoying dispute, there was nothing pleasing to them about the way in which it had been accomplished. The party leaders in the states, including many who claimed to be the Magician's staunch friends, had avoided or straddled the issues raised by Calhoun. Their caution did not indicate that they did not favor Van Buren's renomination--some of them were to fight for it to the last--but it did show that they had no great confidence in his power over the party. They were afraid that, if they took direct action in his favor by insisting on an early convention, they would either split and defeat the party nationally or so weaken their own positions as to lose control of the party in their states.

* * *

Calhoun's proposals that the delegates to the national convention be elected by districts and vote individually were defeated for the same reasons and in the same manner that the national convention was postponed. State leaders were unwilling to reduce their bargaining power in the national convention by abandoning the unit rule, or to revolutionize party organization by adopting such an innovation as the primary election; but they were also unwilling to break up the party by flatly rejecting the demands of the Calhoun men, or to brave the popular displeasure which such a rejection might have provoked. So they devised elaborate methods of evading the issue. The Indiana convention, for example, chose two delegates-at-large and three delegates per congressional district to attend the national convention, but then authorized the congressional district conventions to select different delegates or to instruct those already chosen.[9]

This was a far cry from Calhoun's proposal, but it was not so inconsistent with it as the action of his friends in Georgia. Despite his pleas that they adopt all his reforms, the state rights Democrats, who controlled the Georgia convention, adopted a full slate of delegates, instructed them to vote for Calhoun, and subjected them to the unit rule! From their own point of view the action of the Georgia Calhoun men made sense. The Democratic party in their state had insisted, over Whig objections, that Congressmen be elected at large instead of by districts; if they adopted the district system for national convention delegates, they would be inconsistent. Furthermore, the local Democratic

organizations in northern Georgia were controlled by Van Buren men, so Calhoun would have lost strength under the district system.[10] The Georgians had done what they thought most expedient in their local situation, but they had subjected their national organization to charges of hypocrisy.

Even more embarrassing to Calhoun was the conduct of the Charleston Mercury, the most prominent newspaper of the state rights faction, which soon after the Georgia convention appeared to withdraw the faction's demand for the adoption of the district system. In response to the decision of the Virginia Democrats to subject their national convention delegates to the unit rule, the South Carolina Democratic state convention in May issued an address which seemed to insist, as a condition of their participation in the national meeting, that all delegates be chosen by districts and allowed to vote individually. In the Richmond Enquirer, Thomas Ritchie asked the Carolinians to clarify their intentions. Were they claiming a right to dictate to the Democratic parties of the other states? Would they refuse to act with delegations which were bound by the unit rule? Would they refuse to support a nominee chosen by such delegations? The editor of the Mercury replied, early in June, that he believed his state was willing to take part in a national convention constituted in accordance with the "known wishes of a majority of the party," provided that it was held no earlier than May, 1844, and that, having entered into such a convention, South Carolina Democrats would not refuse to support its nominee.[11]

In this case the Mercury did not speak for Calhoun,

who continued to insist on the adoption of all the reforms he had proposed.[12] Nor did it speak for Robert M. T. Hunter, Calhoun's campaign manager in Virginia, who had not been overawed by the victory of the Van Buren men at the March state convention. Under Hunter's leadership the state rights men in Virginia distributed biographies of Calhoun and copies of his speeches, set up a newspaper at Petersburg to champion his cause, sought to establish an electioneering organization in every county, and, in speeches and editorials, constantly agitated the tariff issue. Hunter's goal was to force Ritchie and the regular Democrats to consent to the popular election of national convention delegates. If they would not, Hunter planned to go ahead with the election of delegates anyway, in the belief that the Van Buren men would either take part in the elections out of fear of public opinion or be exposed as enemies of popular sovereignty by their intransigence.[13]

Hunter urged the Calhoun men in other states to adopt the same tactics, but with no success.[14] The state rights Democrats, like their copartisans, were too concerned with preserving their positions in their state party organizations, or in preventing the disruption of the party nationally, to commit themselves or try to commit the party explicitly to a proposal which was so closely connected with a particular presidential candidacy. Other Democrats made it easier for the Calhoun men to put their own interests and those of the party ahead of the interests of their candidate by accepting, in their state conventions, variations on the district system which stripped the proposal of its intended results.

Both groups acted in the same spirit. If the state

rights Democrats had had more confidence in Calhoun, they would not have accepted the spurious compromises tendered them by men they did not trust. If the Van Buren Democrats had had more confidence in the Magician, they would not have offered even spurious compromises to men whom they did not trust. Conscious of the vacuum of leadership in their party, of the lack of any force such as Jackson had exercised to hold the party together or to give it a popular majority even if some of its lesser leaders revolted against him, Democrats of all persuasions, despite mutual jealousy and distrust, did what they could to prevent the party from breaking up. Eventually they would understand what they had been doing well enough to make it the basis of a new system of national party organization and government. Meanwhile they acted almost instinctively, because they did not know what else to do while they waited for another Jackson to turn up. Eventually they would realize that there was not going to be another Jackson, but that they could get along without one. For the time being, all most Democrats clearly understood about their situation was that neither Van Buren nor any of his rivals was capable of filling the vacuum of leadership.

* * *

A lack of confidence in Van Buren was particularly evident in the conduct of Thomas Ritchie of Virginia. Sensing that other Democrats shared his concern for party unity, Ritchie did not hesitate to challenge those Calhoun men who threatened to break up the party unless the district system was adopted. But on issues involving Van Buren personally, rather than the party, Ritchie was so cautious that his conduct seriously embarrassed

the Magician.

Not until the middle of July, 1843, did Ritchie finally commit the Richmond Enquirer to Van Buren, and even then he left its columns open to the advocates of other candidates. While the Van Buren men in Virginia were left leaderless and disorganized and the Calhoun men campaigned vigorously for their candidate, Ritchie's friends tried without avail to persuade him to abandon his "'shilly-shally' course."[15]

Most of Ritchie's fears arose out of the controversy over the Tariff Act of 1842, for which Senator Wright, Van Buren's campaign manager, had voted. Since the passage of the Act Ritchie had repeatedly printed, in the Enquirer, reports that Van Buren disapproved of it and that Wright was determined to amend it at the next session of Congress, but Virginia Calhounites continued to denounce the Magician as a protectionist. So, in the fall of 1843, Ritchie decided to refute their charges with evidence they could not ignore.

Back in February, in response to the pleas of his Virginia friends, Van Buren had given them a confidential statement that he disapproved of the Tariff of 1842 "in principle and in detail." Ritchie had filed this letter away after discreetly showing it to delegates to the state convention in March. Now, without obtaining Van Buren's permission to do so, Ritchie published the Magician's letter. This was very embarrassing to Van Buren, for the letter was dated after his reply to the Indiana convention (which had been falsely dated February 15), and it was shorter and more pointed than his remarks on the tariff in the

Indiana reply. Consequently, the publication of his Virginia letter raised doubts about Van Buren's opinion on the tariff and gave his enemies in Pennsylvania and other protectionist states a powerful weapon against him.[16]

* * *

Another charge against Van Buren, that his nomination would weaken and defeat the party ticket because of his unpopularity, was a favorite theme of the supporters of Lewis Cass.[17] By touring the West during the spring and summer of 1842, before he had openly become a candidate, Van Buren had done what he could to increase his popularity in that section.[18] His friends in Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, Mississippi, and Louisiana, by their caution in avoiding any commitment to his candidacy in the face of state elections, had virtually admitted that the trip had been a failure and that the Cass men were right, but had prevented Van Buren's unpopularity being proved. In the Tennessee election of August, 1843, the Magician was not so lucky.

The Tennessee gubernatorial candidate in this election was James K. Polk, who had been Speaker of the House of Representatives during Jackson's second term. In 1839 Polk had left Congress to seek, and win, the Tennessee Governorship. He had run then, despite earlier reluctance to link his fortune with Van Buren's, as a supporter of the Magician's policies, and the next year he had actively campaigned for Van Buren's re-election. His support of Van Buren was, in fact, a main theme of the Whigs in the election of 1841, when the Governor was narrowly defeated for re-election himself. Furthermore, Polk was known to be running

for Governor again in 1843 in order to convince Van Buren that, as a vice presidential candidate in 1844, he would strengthen the ticket in the West. So, although the Tennessee Democrats had not formally endorsed Van Buren's candidacy, Polk could not have been more clearly identified with the Magician.[19]

To Polk's and Van Buren's consternation, Polk lost the 1843 election by a margin slightly greater than in 1841. Van Buren blamed the defeat on Polk's bad management, but many Tennessee Democrats thought otherwise. It was Van Buren's unpopularity, they charged, which had dragged Polk down; with another presidential candidate--with "ANY OTHER candidate," one Democratic newspaper editor asserted--the state would be solidly Democratic. Suddenly Lewis Cass was a formidable threat to Van Buren in Tennessee.[20]

Because Tennessee Democrats were eager, after two successive defeats, for a change in their luck, the Cass movement developed rapidly. Talk of abandoning Van Buren was so widespread in Tennessee that some of Polk's friends thought he must have started it. Polk, in turn, was convinced that A. O. P. Nicholson, his rival for Democratic leadership in the state, was the promoter of the Cass boom, and that it was aimed not so much at Van Buren's presidential candidacy as at Polk.[21]

Polk quickly made his position clear and marshaled his forces for the approaching state convention in November, which would choose delegates to the national meeting. But he also decided to make some concessions: the state convention would not nominate Van Buren, or anyone, to the Presidency, but would confine itself to advancing Polk's vice presidential candidacy; furthermore,

it would adopt a modified version of the district system for the choice of national convention delegates.[22]

Congressman Cave Johnson, who was a close friend both of Polk and of the leading Van Buren men in Washington, wanted the Tennessee Democracy to come out boldly for Van Buren despite the August defeat, but the rest of Polk's advisers approved his plan. It would be an easy way to silence the Cass men and was justifiable on the grounds that Tennessee ought not to try to dictate the entire national ticket.[23] An unmentioned advantage of Polk's plan was that, if the national convention deadlocked between Van Buren and one of his rivals, the Tennessee delegation would be free to bargain Polk into the Vice Presidency--or even into the Presidency.

Despite Polk's effort to suppress it, the Cass movement broke out again, in Nashville, shortly before the state convention. Frightened at the prospect of an open struggle in the convention, Polk's friends retreated again: the convention would make no nominations at all, but would appoint a committee to prepare an address to the voters in which both Van Buren and Polk would be endorsed. The convention complied, and elected two state delegates-at-large to the national convention who were dependable friends of Polk; but the committee was not so cooperative--its address was long delayed and, when finally published, said nothing about Van Buren.[24]

Polk, who depended primarily upon Van Buren for a re-entry into national politics, had repeatedly sacrificed Van Buren's interests to prevent a split in the party in Tennessee which would have hurt both himself and Van Buren. He had been

obliged to do so either because of his own poor management, as Van Buren believed, or because Van Buren was so unpopular, as most Tennessee Democrats believed. Polk and his friends, in explaining to the Magician why the Tennessee convention had not endorsed him, put all the blame on Nicholson.[25] Whatever the reason, Van Buren had suffered a real defeat in Tennessee.

* * *

While Van Buren's friends in the South and West retreated in disorder or, at best, stood still waiting for some sign that it was safe to move, some of his supporters in the Northeast did act boldly in his behalf during 1843.

Governor John Fairfield of Maine was one of these aggressive Van Buren men. During the winter session of the Maine legislature he had prevented action on the presidential question despite the threats of the Calhounites to retaliate by opposing his candidacy for the United States Senate. They fulfilled their threats, but did not defeat Fairfield, and then he and his allies organized in preparation for the state convention in June. At the convention Fairfield was in complete control. One of his friends won the gubernatorial nomination, two others were chosen delegates-at-large to the national meeting, and the convention adopted a resolution endorsing Van Buren. The Calhoun men had threatened to bolt the party if it committed itself to the Magician, and some of them did so. But the regular ticket won the state election and, in the congressional district conventions, Fairfield's friends were again in command and selected most of the district delegates to the national convention.[26]

In Connecticut, newspaper editor Gideon Welles took over leadership of the party from his friend John M. Niles, who was ill, and won a real victory for Van Buren. The October state convention named the entire delegation to the national convention and instructed it to vote for the Magician. Vermont Democrats, led by George Barker, who had held federal office under Van Buren, likewise favored his renomination at their state convention in October.[27]

The largest bloc of delegates pledged to Van Buren during 1843 was from his home state, New York, where the Democratic convention met early in September. Although the convention was to deal only with national questions, the Magician and his aides took elaborate precautions to prevent a renewal of the embarrassing factional quarrel over state issues which had nearly prevented the adoption of the legislative address in April. Governor William S. Bouck was determined that the convention should endorse his conduct, of which the Radical faction had been highly critical. To settle the matter, the Democratic convention in Van Buren's home county sided with the Governor, and the Radicals took the hint; once more, for Van Buren's sake, they suppressed their desire to revenge themselves upon their opponents within the party. Secretary of State Samuel Young eliminated another possible source of discord by declining to compete with ex-Governor William L. Marcy for the chairmanship of the convention. The last serious threat to unity was met by Benjamin F. Butler, the Magician's former law student, partner, and Attorney-General, who helped to prevent the capture of the New York City delegation by a coalition

of Cass and Calhoun men. The district system was proposed at the state convention, but the New York Democrats rejected it by an overwhelming margin, nominated Van Buren, and chose a delegation to the national convention which could be depended upon to support him.[28]

Van Buren's victories in the Northeast were heartening. They gave him more pledged or instructed delegates to the national convention than all his rivals combined. But they still were not enough to end the presidential contest. In too many states the party had refused to make a choice among the candidates.

* * *

The action of the New York convention did settle one thing: it convinced John C. Calhoun and his supporters that there was no hope of persuading the Van Buren wing of the party to adopt the district system. Consequently the Calhoun men in New York City decided to defy the New York state convention and to choose national convention delegates by districts, as Robert M. T. Hunter proposed to do in Virginia. They were encouraged to carry out their plan by some state rights Democrats in other states and by Calhoun himself.[29]

Some of the Calhoun men intended that the delegates thus selected should seek admission to the Democratic national convention; others of them were ready to bolt the party at once and hold a separate convention--which was the most likely result of the selection of contesting delegates in any case. Even before he had known the outcome of the New York convention, Calhoun had argued that, if it rejected the district system, "It would make the

crisis, which, if seized, would give us the control . . ." His friends should call on the people in every state to proceed with the election of national convention delegates by districts. "The bolder and more prompt" the action of his friends, "the better and more safe" it would be, he believed, for if the New York and Virginia leaders were not convinced before the convention that they must accept reform, the party would be split.[30]

Calhoun badly misunderstood the temper of the party. State conventions had hesitated to endorse Van Buren, or had made concessions as to the time of the national convention or the use of the district system, largely out of a fear that the state rights faction would bolt, coupled with a hope that, if treated gently, they might not do so. If that fear was realized and that hope destroyed, in a manner which showed that the Calhoun men felt no obligation to obey the decisions of regularly constituted state conventions, their influence in the party would vanish.[31]

Calhoun's principal advisers had a somewhat better understanding of his and their situation. Congressman Robert Barnwell Rhett and former Congressman Francis W. Pickens, both South Carolinians and intimate associates of Calhoun, warned him that the state rights faction could not, by itself, elect him. Pickens doubted that it could even take enough votes from the two major parties to throw the presidential election into the House of Representatives. Rhett therefore urged, and Pickens agreed with him, that the Calhoun men remain in the Democratic party at least until they had tried every possible means of defeating Van Buren from within it.[32]

Thus far Rhett's reasoning was sound; but his other ideas were utterly impractical. He had been engaged, for some time, in trying to arrange a coalition of all Democrats who were not Van Buren men, and perhaps some Whigs too, to control the organization of the House of Representatives, or at least the election of its printer, when the new Congress met in December, 1843. He hoped that the success of such a coalition would, by demonstrating that Van Buren could not be nominated, force him to withdraw from from the presidential race.[33]

Rhett's plan was absurd, as he ought to have known. In opposing Calhoun's plan to ignore the existing Democratic organization and in effect run for President as an independent, Rhett had argued that he could not be elected without the firm support of the entire Democratic party, including the Van Buren men, and perhaps not even then. And Rhett had every reason to know that the formation of such a coalition as he proposed would, whatever its effect on Van Buren, guarantee that Van Buren's friends would never support Calhoun. Many of them were still resentful of a similar attempt by Rhett to control the organization of the House back in 1839.[34] Rhett also must have known of the bitterness of the Van Buren men about the North Carolina senatorial election of December, 1842, when the Calhounites had prevented the re-election of Bedford Brown despite his being the choice of the Democratic caucus. Rhett's coalition, if successful, would destroy not only Van Buren, but the Democratic party and therefore, by Rhett's own reasoning, Calhoun.

Regardless of its effects on Van Buren, the party, and

Calhoun, Rhett's scheme was silly because, again as he had good reason to know, not even the state rights Democrats were likely to participate in it. In North Carolina, for example, they had helped elect William H. Haywood, a Democrat, to the Senate rather than accept Whig support for Romulus M. Saunders, their own candidate. Furthermore, despite Hunter's diligent efforts, the state rights men had made little progress toward the formation of a national organization capable of playing a major role in the Democratic party;[35] and in state after state they had, like Van Buren's friends, avoided or compromised issues connected with the Presidency in order to preserve party unity for state elections. And yet Rhett was proposing that they form a coalition in violation of party discipline--that they commit themselves to a party without the Van Buren men, if the coalition succeeded, or to a Democratic party with Van Buren but without themselves, if it failed. That was a commitment which most of the Calhoun men had repeatedly refused to make, and which Rhett himself had opposed when Calhoun had suggested it.

Rhett also knew that the Buchanan men from Pennsylvania, who were the largest and best organized bloc of anti-Van Buren Democrats aside from the Calhounites, were almost certain to stay out of the coalition. Rhett had already invited Senator Buchanan to join in a more limited movement to defeat the election of Francis P. Blair as printer to the House; he had also urged the Senator to support the district system for the selection of national convention delegates. Buchanan's reply had been blunt: he had read Rhett's pamphlet on reform of the national convention,

and he was not convinced. As for the election of the House printer, Buchanan had denied that he would have any influence over the Representatives from his state, but he had predicted that they would support the nominee of the Democratic caucus. Pennsylvania Democrats, he had added, "always denounced as deserters" anyone who refused to support regular nominations. Yet Rhett now expected Buchanan and his friends to join in an even bolder revolt against the House Democratic caucus--and in order to give the Speakership to William Wilkins of Pittsburgh, the candidate Rhett had chosen, who for twenty years had been a member of a faction opposed to Buchanan in Pennsylvania![36]

Rhett's original plan to control the election of the printer to the House of Representatives might have had some chance of success, for Frank Blair, the Van Buren men's candidate, had many enemies. Since December, 1830, when he had come to Washington to establish the Globe and serve as editorial spokesman for President Andrew Jackson, Blair had vigorously defended Jackson, Van Buren, and their policies, and had vitriolicly attacked their opponents, who consequently had become his own. And, partly because of his unrelenting war on President Tyler and those Democrats who accepted office from him, Blair had acquired still other enemies.[37]

One of the latter was Amos Kendall, who had been Blair's friend and associate in Kentucky, had recommended him to Jackson, and had been Blair's partner in the publication of a campaign paper in 1840. A law suit arising out of Kendall's official conduct as Postmaster-General under Van Buren obliged

him to remain in the District of Columbia, where he tried to support his family by publishing a weekly, the Expositor. It was not a financial success, and Kendall was further troubled by bad health; while his problems multiplied, Blair prospered. Late in 1842 Kendall quarreled with Blair, ostensibly about business matters, and soon after he began bombarding Van Buren with letters criticizing Blair's editorial policy, especially the attacks on Tyler. In August, 1843, Kendall formally announced his candidacy for the office of printer, provided the Democratic party wanted him to have it and provided his election would do no injury to any other candidate. He based his candidacy on his past services to the party and on his financial difficulties, which he said were due to his public service.[39] This was an unobjectionable position, but by late November either his money troubles or his continuing quarrel with Blair prompted Kendall to go much further. He announced, in effect, that he would accept support from any quarter--thus offering himself as a rallying point for all of Blair's enemies and those of Van Buren's enemies who wished to strike at him through Blair.[40]

By then Blair's principal enemy, Congressman Rhett, had expanded his plan to control the election of the printer into a scheme to organize the House of Representatives in defiance of the Democratic caucus. The Tyler men were willing to take part, as were the friends of Colonel Richard M. Johnson, and Rhett still hoped the Pennsylvanians would join the conspiracy. William Wilkins, the Pennsylvanian whom Rhett was backing for Speaker, had agreed to the plan and had made suitable promises about the

distribution of committee assignments.[41] But Senator Buchanan's cooperation was still important and, as Rhett had good reason to know, was not forthcoming.

Late in November Buchanan arrived in Washington and soon afterward he was approached by Robert Tyler, the President's son. Tyler did not hesitate, despite the presence of a Van Buren man in Buchanan's room, to invite the Senator into the coalition. In words almost identical to those he had previously written to Rhett, Buchanan again flatly refused.[42]

About the same time, Congressman Charles J. Ingersoll of Philadelphia learned of Rhett's plan and at once went to work to thwart it. So did Romulus M. Saunders of North Carolina, whom Calhoun considered his best friend in that state and who had great influence over the state rights faction. Disappointed by Buchanan's stern rejection of their proposals and frightened by Ingersoll's and Saunders's warnings against irregularity, the Calhounites and their allies disbanded their organization on the 1st of December, three days before the House Democratic caucus was to meet. Disgusted, Rhett vowed not to attend the caucus no matter what his friends did, but even he was persuaded to relent. Saunders suggested that the state rights Democrats should insist that no caucus nomination be binding unless made by a two-thirds majority; if their ultimatum was not met, they would walk out. In response to the urging of Dixon H. Lewis of Alabama, Rhett agreed to attend the caucus and give Saunders's plan a trial.[43]

Buchanan, who was Van Buren's rival, Saunders, who opposed Van Buren's renomination, and Ingersoll, who favored it,

had worked together to prevent the disruption of the caucus and the party. The Van Buren men completed the work when the caucus met by willingly agreeing to the adoption of the two-thirds rule. And then, to the astonishment of Rhett and his friends, the caucus saved Van Buren from an embarrassing defeat by giving John W. Jones of Virginia, the candidate of the Magician's friends, the nomination for Speaker by a two-thirds majority on the first ballot. Even a few of the Calhoun men had voted for Jones. Stunned, Rhett, Saunders, and James B. Belser of Alabama made speeches in which they admitted their weakness and appealed to the majority to be generous in the assignment of committee memberships. Belser added that Calhoun could not get the presidential nomination and, in remarks which were interpreted by many Democrats as a withdrawal of Calhoun from the contest, promised that the state rights Democrats would support the nominee of the party.[44]

The next night the caucus met again to choose the printer and the clerk of the House. Despite Jones's victory, the leading Van Buren men were still afraid that Kendall's long association with Jackson and Van Buren and his recent flirtation with their enemies would enable him to defeat Blair. But Cave Johnson of Tennessee called the attention of the caucus to Kendall's offer to accept whatever support he could get, which damned him as an irregular, and Blair won on the first ballot. All that remained was to name John J. McNulty of Ohio, another Van Buren man, to the clerkship, which was done after a brief struggle.[45] Jubilant, the Magician's friends congratulated him and themselves on their total victory. His renomination, they were convinced, was a certainty.[46]

* * *

Many other Democrats agreed, and during December and January they showed that they believed the presidential contest to be over and that they acquiesced in its result. James Buchanan, embarrassed by the squabbling among his supporters in Pennsylvania, had already considered withdrawing from the competition; the action of the House caucus settled the matter for him. Colonel Johnson of Kentucky also gave up hope.[47] Many believed that Calhoun had already been withdrawn by his supporters in the caucus; there were rumors that he was preparing some sort of public statement.[48] Cass and Tyler did not formally withdraw, but neither of them had more than a handful of supporters in Congress or a single pledged delegate to the national convention or the control of even one state.[49] Van Buren was without competitors.

Several of the state parties which had previously hesitated now leaped onto the bandwagon. In Alabama, Senator William R. King's friends joined with Van Buren's supporters to control the state convention in mid-December and instruct its delegation to the national convention to vote for Van Buren for President and King for Vice President. On January 8, 1844, Democratic conventions in Mississippi, Louisiana, Ohio, and Michigan instructed their delegations to vote for the Magician's renomination, as did congressional district conventions during December and January in Illinois.[50] Democratic newspapers which had been neutral or had supported other candidates either endorsed Van Buren or began to speak of his renomination as though it had already occurred.[51]

Thus, within six weeks after the surprisingly easy victory of Van Buren's friends in the House caucus, the Democratic party seemed to have accepted Van Buren as their candidate for the Presidency in 1844.

* * *

Yet the vacuum within the party remained, and the party still faced the danger of disruption, for the caucus had not expressed a general desire within the party that Van Buren should lead it. Rather, many Democrats in the caucus had voted for the nomination of Van Buren's friends to the offices of Speaker, Printer, and Clerk for the same reason that many state conventions had previously refused to endorse Van Buren, or refused to insist on an early national convention, or had adopted some empty compromise rather than openly accept or reject the district system: because they feared that any other course would disrupt the Democratic party. The support given Van Buren by the caucus was, like the earlier reluctance to support him, largely an incidental result of the desire of almost all Democrats to preserve their party and their own positions in it, whoever its presidential candidate should be.

At the time the caucus met the presidential contest was not over, but Van Buren was ahead and had more pledged or instructed delegates to the national convention than any other candidate. Many Democratic Congressmen therefore felt as Senator Robert J. Walker had said he felt, back in February, 1843, when he had conferred with Wright: whether they liked it or not, Van Buren was going to be nominated; for the sake of the party his

nomination should be made as harmoniously as possible. They knew that the repudiation of Van Buren by the defeat of Jones, Blair, and McNulty would cause needless rancor, which would be followed by conflicts among Democrats in Congress over legislation and would culminate in a general scramble for the presidential nomination and perhaps the disruption of the party. The identification of the Van Burenite candidates with the preservation of the party was increased by the fact that Rhett and his allies were planning to strike at Van Buren through these candidates for House office by revolting against the organ of party government within the House, the caucus. As James Buchanan had put it, those who opposed caucus nominations were to be condemned as deserters.

Democrats like Buchanan, Walker, and even Saunders were saying, in effect, that the preservation of the party was more important than and in any case absolutely essential to the success of any presidential candidate. Rhett himself had said the same thing, quite explicitly, in urging Calhoun not to bolt the party until his own foolish scheme had been given a trial. In order to prevent the disruption of the caucus the Van Buren men, too, had made a concession--acceptance of the two-thirds rule--which showed that they understood the relative importance of party unity and the fortunes of this or that candidate. They admitted that the right of a simple majority to rule was of no practical value if that majority lacked the power, unaided by the minority, to put its will into effect. Rhett's associates had, in turn, refused to boycott the caucus unless the Magician's friends failed to make that reasonable concession.

This was the same spirit--putting the party first because without the party no faction or individual could gain anything--which had motivated the state leaders of the party during the preceding year. The only important difference was that the state parties had been free to avoid committing themselves to a particular candidate, and for the sake of party unity had often avoided doing so, while the members of the House caucus had been compelled by Rhett's impulsive actions to choose between Van Buren on one hand and a disrupted party on the other and, for the same motive of party unity, had acted in a way which incidentally but unavoidably favored Van Buren's nomination.

Many Democrats misunderstood what had happened, including many who had made it happen. Because they were acting in practical, expedient ways to deal with immediate problems, rather than consciously creating new political institutions to deal with new conditions, they did not see that they were, in fact, creating a new kind of political party--a party which was a loose alliance of sectional, state, and local organizations motivated more by expediency than by agreement on particular candidates or programs; a party in which the President or presidential candidate would not dominate as Jackson had because no one man could amass such a preponderance of power; a party of which the leaders, and their would be many of them, did not make the Presidency their exclusive goal because none of them could be sure of attaining it and because the uncompromising pursuit of it might destroy the party and, with it, their hopes of winning lesser but still desirable offices, honors, and powers.

* * *

Only from such a party could Martin Van Buren have obtained a presidential nomination in 1844, for he had done nothing to create any other kind of party and he had never been able to lead, to command, as Jackson had. He had not even attempted to do so; instead, he had remained in retirement at Lindenwald, his estate near Kinderhook, viewing the presidential contest with his famous equanimity.

From such a position, which ought to have been conducive to objectivity and analysis, and despite his reputed mastery of the art of political management, the Little Magician still did not understand what had happened, or what was required of him by his position as nominee-apparent of such a party as was being created. Early in January, 1844, he predicted that the national convention would be "very harmonious . . . in respect to the Presidential Candidate . . ."[52] Like many other Democrats, he thought the party had united under his leadership.

Astonishing as it would have been for the mythical political magician to have made such an error, it was quite natural for the real Martin Van Buren to have done so. The narrowness of his ambition restricted his vision and restrained him from speculating about what he did see; and his inate conservatism led him to resist or to refuse to conform to those new elements in the political system which he could not ignore. In 1824, when the Republican party was breaking up, he had vainly tried to preserve it without even asking himself why it was crumbling; and he had likewise failed to recognize, in Andrew Jackson's startling

popularity, the instrument which, far better than any caucus, could impose unity on a national party. Just so in 1844 he was unable to see what was required of him--a presidential candidacy suited to the needs and the nature of the new kind of party--because there was nothing in his experience upon which he might have modeled such a candidacy. And he had long since demonstrated his incapacity to invent new political forms or tactics.

## CHAPTER VI

## THE CREAKING BANDWAGON

> "You will have heard much, (and I think that I have written some such foolishness myself), about the harmony that now exists in the Democratic party. We mistake appearances very much. There is a good deal of submission in what is inevitable, without being exactly satisfied with it. Our friends are really doubtful not of the nomination, but of success under it."
>
> Aaron V. Brown of Tennessee, January 14, 1844[1]

The action of the Democratic House caucus of December, 1843, and the response of most Democrats outside Congress showed that they wanted to preserve their party and that to do so they were willing to make Martin Van Buren their presidential candidate once more. But Democrats also wanted to win the election of 1844, and the manner in which Van Buren had obtained the support of the party showed that he did not have the popularity or influence to give it victory. To win in 1844, therefore, Democrats needed a platform which would please their constituents.

The attitudes and interests of Democratic constituencies were not, however, the same in every part of the country, and so one consequence of the apparent settlement of the contest for the presidential nomination was a bitter struggle over legis-

lation among the Democrats in Congress--a struggle which threatened to disrupt the party and make its presidential nomination an empty honor.

* * *

The enactment of the Tariff Act of 1842 by an alliance of Whigs and northern Democrats in the previous Congress had made the tariff a major issue in the approaching election. While the composition of the Senate prevented repeal of the existing law, many Democrats were determined that the House, in which they had a large majority, should pass a bill to reduce the tariff so that their party would be committed against protection in the election of 1844.

The loudest of the clamorers for such a commitment were the state rights faction, who threatened to break up the Party unless it repudiated protectionism. They had been angered by the votes of Senator Silas Wright and other northern Democrats in favor of the Tariff of 1842. Their anger had been increased by Van Buren's quibbling on the subject in his reply to the Indiana convention, by the willingness of Thomas Ritchie and other Virginia Van Buren men to accept his quibbles, and by the resolutions of the New York and Massachusetts Democratic state conventions of September, 1843, which they considered blatantly protectionist. The defeat which they had suffered in the House caucus had done nothing to placate the Calhoun Democrats. Soon after the caucus, both Dixon H. Lewis of Alabama and Robert Barnwell Rhett of South Carolina, prominent members of this faction, expressed to friends of Van Buren their determination that the Democratic party be placed on an anti-protec-

tionist platform at that session of Congress.[2]

Van Buren's supporters in the southern states were equally insistent on the point. Some of them argued that a serious attempt to reduce the tariff was necessary if they were to carry their states for Van Buren. Others, afraid that the Calhoun men might yet bolt the party, wished to deprive them of any plausible excuse for doing so.[3]

Senator Wright, the leader of the Van Buren Democrats in Congress, needed no urging to seek passage of a tariff reduction bill by the House. It was he who had knowingly cast the deciding vote for the Tariff of 1842, who had promised at that time to seek a reduction of the tariff at the next session of Congress, and who would feel responsible if the loss of southern votes on the issue should cost Van Buren the Presidency. He and Van Buren's other close friends were as determined as the Calhounites that the House act on the tariff that session. In organizing the House, they had given the chairmanship of the Ways and Means Committee to James I. McKay of North Carolina, a southern Van Buren man who was willing to sponsor a tariff reduction bill which, as Wright described it, would be "fair and reasonable" and such as northern Democrats could "safely vote for."[4]

But it was Congressman Rhett who raised the issue first, and in a manner which showed little concern for the safety of northern Democrats. On December 18, only two weeks after the organization of the House, Rhett forced a vote on the proposition that no tariff duty should be set higher than twenty per cent ad valorem and that no rate should be set lower than the rest except to prevent

a loss of revenue. While nearly all southern and western Democrats voted for this rule, most of the Democrats from the Northeast joined with the Whigs to defeat it. The division of the Democratic party on sectional lines was ominous; moreover, by voting with the Whigs against Rhett's proposition, many of Van Buren's friends supplied the Calhoun men with new evidence for the charge that the Magician was a protectionist.[5]

Meanwhile another sectional dispute was developing. Only three days after the defeat of Rhett's tariff formula, John Quincy Adams, an anti-slavery Whig, presented a memorial from the Massachusetts legislature requesting a constitutional amendment which would base representation in the House on free population only. While southern Democrats seethed in anger, an alliance of northern Whigs and northern Democrats, including some who were considered Van Buren men, voted to enter the Massachusetts memorial on the Journal of the House and to refer it to a committee. Soon after, on January 2, 1844, the slavery issue was raised again by the report of the committee which had been appointed to report a set of rules for the House. This report was not made by the chairman, Henry A. Wise of Virginia, but by John Quincy Adams, because two northern Democrats, John W. Davis of Indiana and Samuel Beardsley of New York, had joined with the Whig members to control the committee. The report recommended the abandonment of the twenty-first rule of the previous House, the so-called Gag Rule, which prohibited the receipt or reference to committee of petitions about slavery.

The leaders of the Van Buren Democrats sought to avoid the explosive issue raised by the report by postponing its

consideration indefinitely, but the Calhoun men were determined to force the northern Democrats to vote on the subject and they combined with the Whigs to prevent postponement. George W. Dromgoole of Virginia, who was one of the Magician's most able friends in the House, then moved for recommital of the report in the hope that Davis and Beardsley might be persuaded to change their position. Speaker John W. Jones was, however, anxious to avoid charges of partiality and so, rather than put Dromgoole's motion to a vote at once, he recognized Edward J. Black of Georgia, who offered an amendment instructing the committee to include the Gag Rule in its next report. Black congratulated himself on his "good luck" in thus being able to put the Van Buren men in such a "tight place;" they would have to vote on his amendment and thereby commit themselves on the very issue they were trying to avoid. In the angry debate which followed, Black frankly avowed that his "express purpose" was to make northern Democrats "show their hands," and he warned them that their "truth and loyalty to Democracy" would be judged in the South by their votes on his motion. Davis, Beardsley, and Hannibal Hamlin of Maine replied with what Black called "out and out abolition speeches," openly denouncing the Gag Rule, and the rest of the day was spent in a debate which grew increasingly disorderly.[6]

In an effort to suppress the "inflammatory and ungovernable" Black and to avoid further embarrassment to Van Buren and the party, Congressman Cave Johnson of Tennessee arranged a caucus of House Democrats on January 6 to seek a compromise settlement of the dispute. He proposed, as a basis for agreement, the version of

the Gag Rule which had been adopted in 1838, but that proposal was not acceptable. Some northern Democrats insisted that anti-slavery petitions at least be received by the House in order that the constitutional right of petition might not be denied; Johnson thought their request was reasonable, but Black, Rhett, and other southern extremists would not hear of it. Both groups emphasized the danger to the party in their states if it did not adopt the position they were advocating. Moderates like Johnson were more alarmed by the danger to the party nationally if the dispute was not settled amicably and at once.[7]

While the quarrel over anti-slavery petitions dragged on, and while the House was virtually unable to do business because there were no rules under which to muzzle the Whig minority, Silas Wright and the House Ways and Means Committee grappled with the tariff issue. Wright went to considerable trouble to find out just what rates of taxation, expressed as per centages of the actual value of imported goods, had been set in 1842 and to find out what rates of taxation were necessary to the adequate protection of American manufacturers and producers. He hoped and believed that the rates of taxation required to produce an adequate revenue would provide enough protection to be acceptable in the North and that, even with discrimination in favor of such products as wool and iron, the rates could be reduced enough below the levels set in 1842 to satisfy the South.[8]

Despite his conviction that such a tariff was practicable, Wright did not have much hope that it would pass the House; it would be defeated, he feared, because of the "importance men

give to words." Every conceivable rate of taxation on imports would produce some revenue and afford some degree of protection, and so all members of the House might agree, in the abstract, to tax wool at a given rate. But one of them would be certain to describe that rate either as being protective or as being high enough only to produce an adequate revenue, whereupon someone from another section of the country would insist that it be raised or lowered in order to make it the opposite of what it had been called, and his motion would be bitterly resisted. The result of a series of such disputes would determine the reputation of the entire bill, and cause one faction or the other to oppose and defeat it.

So Wright was pessimistic. He was trying to write a bill which northern Democrats could safely vote for, but he doubted that they all would vote for it. And even if they did, he was afraid that it would not satisfy the Calhoun men and that "the fair and candid men of the South" would not dare to support it with such a force of "dissentients" at their backs.[9]

Wright's description of the sort of bill he wanted--one that would be safe in the North--and his fears about the conduct of the Van Buren men in the South were highly significant: they showed that he knew that Van Buren's popularity was not sufficient to protect Democratic candidates for Congress against the anger of their constituents on such an issue as the tariff. Democrats might be willing to nominate Van Buren to the Presidency, but they would not, in reliance on him, leave themselves at the mercy of their Whig opponents and their rivals within the party by

ignoring the prejudices and interests of their constituents.[10] So they were unwilling to compromise the tariff issue, and their disputes about it increased Van Buren's weakness, which weakness was one of the reasons why they had begun the dispute in the first place. And the weaker he became, the more important it was to every Democrat in the House of Representatives that the party adopt the position of his own state or section on the issue. So the dispute over the tariff was likely to drag on, as Wright feared, and even become more unpleasant.[11]

* * *

Wright believed that the desire of some Democrats to injure Van Buren contributed to the difficulty of settling the tariff question. Congressman Black of Georgia, who gleefully reported to a friend that, thanks to the agitation of the tariff and anti-slavery petition issues, "this Democratic Congress may yet kill Mr. Van B.," was certainly as interested in preventing the Magician's renomination as he was in strengthening the party in the South, and other Calhoun men may have been similarly motivated.[12] And yet some of the very South Carolinians whose recalcitrance on these subjects was threatening to disrupt the party and who were therefore suspected by Wright and other Van Buren men of wishing to disrupt it, were really determined to preserve it. Even while they were engaged in the acrimonious debate over the Gag Rule, they were rejecting the proposal of their leader, John C. Calhoun, that they at once abandon the Democratic party and run him as an independent candidate for the Presidency.

The rejection of the district system for the selection

of national convention delegates by the New York convention in September, 1843, coupled with that convention's resolution on the tariff, had exhausted Calhoun's patience with the Van Buren wing of the party. So, while some of his friends sought to carry the struggle for the district system into the national convention by electing competing delegations from Virginia, New York, and other states, and while Rhett promoted his wild scheme to control the organization of the House of Representatives, Calhoun made his own plans. Early in December, while his friends at Washington were surrendering to the Van Buren men in the House caucus but before he had learned of their defeat, Calhoun told his close associates that he would refuse to be a candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination but that he was not necessarily withdrawing from the presidential race. If his friends wanted him to do so, he would remain a candidate in order to serve as a rallying point for all the opponents of corrupt political management and of protectionism. He had no hope of being elected, but he did hope that his candidacy would be the beginning of a reform movement which would eventually purify politics, restore the Constitution, and save the Union.[13]

Shortly before Christmas, Calhoun finished drafting an "Address to his Political Friends and Supporters" in which he defined his own position, excoriated Van Buren and his associates for their alleged hypocrisy and repeated betrayals of the South on the tariff issue and for their refusal to allow popular control of the national convention, and, in suitably modest and therefore inexplicit language, invited the formation of a third party with

himself as its presidential candidate. He sent copies of the Address to the South Carolina delegation in Congress and to the Central Committee of his campaign organization at Charleston so that they could suggest changes in its wording and prepare to respond to it when it was published. He hoped to see it in print within a few days.[14]

The South Carolina members of Congress met to hear and discuss Calhoun's Address on the night of January 2, the day of the report from the committee on revision of the rules. Despite the anger which they were to show in the debate the next few days toward the northern Democrats, most of the South Carolinians were appalled by Calhoun's proposal that they at once break up the party. Senator George McDuffie, who reported on the meeting to Calhoun, approved of Calhoun's decision to withdraw from the contest for the Democratic nomination, but argued that his friends ought not to respond to the Address lest, by depriving the Van Buren men of the hope that they would support the Magician, they destroy any chance for action by the House to reduce the tariff. McDuffie was saying, as gently as he could, that if Calhoun left the Democratic party he would leave it alone.[15]

Congressman Dixon H. Lewis of Alabama, who had been brought into the consultation, spoke more plainly. He argued that Calhoun should base his withdrawal from the presidential race solely on the manner in which the national convention was to be organized, and eliminate from his Address "all cuts and taunts of Van Buren." If Calhoun refused to participate in the national convention, but offered to support the Democratic candidate provided he was sound

on the tariff and other sectional issues, Lewis argued, the party would either force Van Buren to adopt Calhoun's platform or "throw him overboard." Lewis further suggested that Calhoun might yet get the Democratic presidential nomination, if Van Buren's unpopularity increased and if Calhoun conciliated the Magician's friends by abandoning the contest. In any case, he warned Calhoun, most of the state rights Democrats had already committed themselves to support the Democratic candidate and they could not follow him out of the party. (McDuffie had told Calhoun that not even all of the South Carolina congressional delegation would do so.) Lewis also wrote Calhoun's friends in Charleston to urge, if the Address had not already been published--"which I trust in God it has not"--that Calhoun be persuaded to amend it.[16]

Calhoun's advisers in Charleston offered similar advice, emphasizing the possibility that he might be the Democratic presidential candidate in 1848 and indicating their own reluctance to be blamed for the disruption of the party.[17] In offering himself as a sacrifice to the cause of free trade and of truly democratic party organization, Calhoun had shown little hope or concern for his own presidential ambitions; his friends either believed he was lying or failed to share his preference for being right rather than being President. Their arguments against his plan assumed that his getting elected President and their retaining their membership in the Democratic party, through which they had the best chance of political advancement, were the considerations which came first with him as with them. Calhoun had misjudged his friends.

Grimly, but with enough good will to pretend or perhaps even to believe that the hope of reducing the tariff was their motive for refusing to leave the Democratic party, Calhoun accepted as many as he could of his friends' suggestions. He softened some of his criticisms of Van Buren and struck out the rest of them, and sent the amended Address to Charleston to be printed. The Committee published it in the Mercury, without further alteration, but accompanied by comments announcing that Calhoun had entirely withdrawn from the presidential race! Calhoun had not rewritten or suppressed that part of his Address in which he offered to run as an independent candidate, but he had, out of a sense of delicacy, been rather vague in nominating himself to the Presidency. This vagueness, coupled with the mistaken but widespread belief that his Address was a response to the defeat suffered by his friends in the House caucus, made it easy for the Charleston committee to misrepresent his position. Calhoun became angry when he saw how he had been treated, and demanded that the Mercury set the record straight--that it announce that he had not withdrawn but had been withdrawn by his friends.[18] But the damage had already been done.

The issue of the Mercury containing the Address reached Richmond, Virginia, on January 31, 1844, the day before the Democratic state convention. Despite Calhoun's failure to be explicit and the effort at Charleston to disguise his meaning still further by misrepresenting it, both the Whigs and the leaders of the Van Buren Democrats understood exactly what Calhoun was proposing to his political friends. The Whigs were jubilant, the

Van Buren men appalled; one of the latter, William H. Roane, called the Address a "hand grenade."[19]

But the Virginia Calhoun men were no more eager than their associates in South Carolina and Washington to participate in an explosion of the Democratic party; they had been too badly frightened by the failure of their own attempt to terrify the Van Buren men in Virginia into submission. Their elaborate plans to hold elections for the choice of delegates to the national convention had fizzled out without making so much as a pop, and in all but one congressional district convention they had not even been able to prevent the adoption of resolutions pledging the party in Virginia to support the nominee of the national convention. A few of them were willing to walk out of the state convention if a similar pledge were exacted there, but the rest were not, and all of them were grateful for the opportunity which Calhoun's Address gave them to back down gracefully. In their hands, the grenade was transformed into a dove of peace.[20]

After a hastily gathered caucus, the Virginia Calhoun men told Thomas Ritchie that they would agree to pledge support of the presidential candidate of the Democratic party on two conditions. The first was that they not be asked to pledge their support of the nominee of the Democratic national convention--that is, that they not be required explicitly to accept their defeat on the issues they had raised about the composition and voting procedure of the national convention. The second condition was that the Virginia state convention adopt a platform conforming to the views of the state rights faction on the tariff and anti-slavery petition

issues and that they receive some assurrance, either by the pledge of the Democratic nominee or by the votes and acts of his friends in Congress, that this platform would be upheld by the candidate. Ritchie accepted their offer and the Virginia convention was very harmonious. The Calhoun men issued an address of their own after it was over in which they set forth the terms of their support of the Democratic presidential candidate.[21] The spirit of the House caucus of the previous December still prevailed.

* * *

The response of the Virginia state rights faction to Calhoun's Address was gratifying to the Van Buren men, but the Virginia convention had not, any more than the House caucus earlier, assurred the future unity of the party or its victory in the election of 1844.[22] The difficult tariff and anti-slavery petition disputes remained unsettled, and the Calhoun men continued to blame Van Buren's supporters for the deadlock and to hold the Magician responsible for the conduct of his supporters. Other Southerners, more friendly to Van Buren, knew that he did not control or even sympathize with such men as Beardsley, but regretted that he did not publicly repudiate them.[23]

Van Buren would not do that. The reaction in the North to the publication of his Virginia letter on the Tariff Act of 1842 had convinced him that he dare not commit himself further to the southern point of view on any sectional issue. He had shown his determination to remain silent during January, when Ritchie and Hugh A. Garland of Virginia had sought still another statement from him on the tariff for publication in connection

with their state convention.[24]

Remembering his earlier experience with letters to Virginia, Van Buren did not reply to Garland, whom Ritchie had had write to him on the subject, but to William H. Roane, an old friend in whose discretion and obedience to instructions he had more confidence. In his letter to Roane, the Magician politely but emphatically refused to make any new public statement on the tariff. His reply to the Indiana convention, he said, contained his views "in full and without reserve;" all who really desired to understand them had found no difficulty in doing so. Besides, the Whigs would seize upon any new letter as proof that he had sold out his own section to the South, as they had already done with his brief letter to Virginia sent the previous February and published without authority that fall.[25]

Just as he refused to say anything more for publication about the tariff, so Van Buren ignored, during February and March, the repeated hints of Southerners that he ought publicly to repudiate Congressman Beardsley's opposition to the Gag Rule. One such Southern Democrat, John Slidell of Louisiana, told Van Buren that it would be much better to put Beardsley "openly in the ranks of the enemy" than to allow him to continue to misrepresent Van Buren's views. The Magician replied to Slidell in a letter so brief and vague that, if it was published, no one would be able to make sense of it. To Robert B. Rhett, who threatened disruption of the party unless the tariff was radically reformed, Van Buren replied in almost identical language. So non-committal was he that he could reply to both friend and enemy on two different

topics in the same words.[26] He regretted the intraparty disputes over these issues as much or more than any other Democrat--they were doing him more harm than any other Democrat; but he was no more willing than Rhett or Beardsley to risk the wrath of the voters of his own section of the Union by trying to conciliate those of the other section. Like his friend Senator Wright and, again, like Rhett and Beardsley, Van Buren had too little confidence in his own popularity to offer it as a shield to Democrats who would defy sectional feelings for the sake of his presidential candidacy.

In the absence of such popularity on the part of their candidate, Democrats had no choice but to try to make their party's legislative record as satisfactory to their respective constituents as possible,[27] and Wright's tariff bill met, therefore, the same fate as Cave Johnson's earlier efforts to compromise the petition issue. The bill, with most of the committee report which was to accompany it, was completed late in February, and Chairman James I. McKay of the Ways and Means Committee, who was to give his name to the bill which Wright had drawn up, showed both bill and report confidentially to leading Democrats of both houses. Senator McDuffie and most of the South Carolina members of the House were satisfied, but Rhett, Dixon H. Lewis, and James E. Belser were not, and Calhoun, on the basis of Rhett's description of the bill, agreed with the three extremists in opposing it.[28] At the same time, Congressman Richard D. Davis of New York protested strongly against the report which accompanied the bill, and which Senator Wright planned to use as a Democratic campaign document. Wright, Davis complained, had "thrown away the North to gain the South."[29]

The dispute over the rules was finally settled, the last day of February, when the Gag Rule was retained by a very narrow majority.[30] Soon after the "McKay" bill to reduce the tariff was introduced; but, because of the opposition of both free trade and protectionist Democrats and the efforts of the delighted Whigs to prolong the internecine conflict among the Democrats, it could not be brought to a vote for weeks after it was introduced.[31] So, during March and April, the demands made by the Calhoun men, as conditions of their support of Van Buren, remained unmet.

* * *

For Van Buren, the most serious consequence of the intraparty disputes in the House of Representatives was that they increased the doubts of many Democrats that he could be elected President again. No one pretended that he had anything like the popularity of Jackson, and his opponents had been repeating for two years the charge that he could not win. The divisions in the party in Congress supplied new evidence for their argument, and the apparent certainty that he would be nominated had the effect of making the attack on him on this score more effective. As long as Democrats had had a choice between Van Buren and Calhoun, or Buchanan, or Cass, or Johnson, most of them had preferred Van Buren because none of his rivals was more popular than he and because Van Buren was more closely associated with the party's platform. But once the party's choice seemed to have been made, Democrats compared Van Buren not to his former rivals, but to Henry Clay, who was certain to get the Whig nomination, and many of them were doubtful that the Magician could defeat Clay. The

result was an undercurrent of dissatisfaction and fear, which was increased by the troubles in Congress and which Van Buren's enemies employed to undermine his position.[32]

All of Van Buren's rivals for the Democratic nomination except Lewis Cass and John Tyler had withdrawn from the race during the winter of 1843-1844, and Tyler, who was trying to organize a third party, had apparently decided that he had no chance for the Democratic nomination. In order to strengthen his position Tyler opened negotiations with such prominent Democrats as Calhoun, Polk, and Wright, to fill vacancies in his Cabinet and on the Supreme Court. Only Calhoun actually entered the Administration, and he was not motivated by a desire to help Tyler.[33] But many lesser Democrats were very eager, as they had been ever since Tyler had broken with the Clay Whigs, to obtain federal appointments, and so the federal patronage remained an obstacle to Van Buren's leadership of the party.[34] A more serious threat, however, was the systematic effort of the friends of Lewis Cass to convince their fellow Democrats and even Van Buren himself that he could not be elected, and thus compel him to give up his candidacy.

The Cass Democrats had emphasized Van Buren's unavailability from the beginning of the campaign, but early in 1844 they redoubled their efforts with a determination proportionate to the hopelessness of their position if they failed to defeat his nomination.[35] The New York Standard, a Cass paper, urged Democrats to write to Van Buren and ask him to withdraw from the race.[36] In another letter-writing campaign, which they conducted with less publicity, the Cass men, representing themselves as friendly to

Van Buren, wrote to acquaintances in other states and to their Congressmen that the Magician was--through no fault of his own, of course--unable to carry their states or districts. Senator Wright discovered late in February that the members of Congress from Indiana and Illinois seemed to be thoroughly frightened by the letters of this type which they had received. He thought they were foolish and fearful; he did not know that some of them, including the energetic and influential young Representative from Illinois, Stephen A. Douglas, were using their franking privileges to further the circulation of the defeatist letters.[37]

While Van Buren refused to intervene in the disputes over the tariff and anti-slavery petitions, he was bold in dealing with this effort to get him to withdraw. To Senator Wright he sent a comment on their plans, to show to members of Congress, which was so truculent that it at first astonished Wright. Van Buren made it clear that he would not voluntarily quit the race; and if his enemies within the party were bold and foolish enough formally and publicly to ask him to do so, he would "write such an answer for publication as would show most strongly the impropriety of the request and put the Democracy of the nation in full possession of [the facts about] what is going on." Several of Van Buren's friends from states other than New York were equally critical of those Democrats who still talked of finding some other candidate or who gave unnecessary publicity to the unfortunate disagreements in Congress.[38]

At the same time, the Van Buren men did what they could to encourage those who feared defeat in the presidential

election. Van Buren and Wright agreed that they must let Colonel Richard M. Johnson have the vice presidential nomination in order to make use of "his disgusting popularity."[39] And Henry D. Gilpin of Philadelphia urged Van Buren to think seriously about taking a stand on the Oregon question. The future status of the Oregon Country, which since 1818 had been jointly occupied by Great Britain and the United States, was then the subject of negotiations between the two nations. As the depression ended and the American people plunged into a new era of activity and prosperity, national expansion appealed to their optimistic and energetic spirit. Gilpin believed that Van Buren could gain great popularity by championing the American claim to the disputed territory.[40]

* * *

While Van Buren tried to keep still, to avoid committing himself any further on the issues which divided the party and threatened to make its nomination an empty honor, and while Silas Wright struggled without much hope to settle those issues amicably, Gilpin sought to increase Van Buren's popularity by broadening his platform. Once he, like Van Buren, had hoped to confine the campaign of 1844 to "the true issue"--the Independent Treasury versus the National Bank--and to avoid new issues. But the tariff and petition issues had been raised, and had had their effect, so Gilpin advised the Magician to advocate national expansion, which would enthuse and unite the voters of all sections of the country.

During the spring of 1844, as the disunity in their party grew, as the defeatist whispering campaign against Van Buren went on, and as they became more fearful that their party would be

disrupted, or defeated, or both, many other Democrats thought about national expansion. If they could not have a strong, popular candidate, they were determined to have a strong, popular platform: the acquisition of all Oregon, perhaps--or, better yet, the immediate annexation of Texas.

## CHAPTER VII

## A NEW ISSUE

> "Can I be mistaken in the supposition that . . . this Texas project contains all the elements of popularity? Depend on it, the spirit of the age, that spirit that is not now and never can be controlled by party, demands the acquisition of Texas."
>
> S. M. Johnson of Michigan, May 9, 1844[1]

Texas had been in the background of politics and in the backs of the minds of many politicians since 1837, when both Congress and the Van Buren Administration had decided against annexing the then new Republic of Texas to the Union. The refusal of Mexico to recognize the independence of Texas had been the professed reason for that decision, but the opposition in the North to the admission of another slave state had also influenced many political leaders--not only northern men like President Van Buren but also Southerners who were concerned about the unity and strength of their party.

President John Tyler, who in 1843 had no party to preserve, was not so constrained. He had previously considered the annexation of Texas, but had had to abandon the idea. When, during the summer of 1843, he learned of alleged British offers of financial assistance, which the struggling Texan Republic badly

needed, in exchange for the abolition of slavery in Texas, he had, alarmed at the prospect of a British-Texan alliance, opened negotiations with the Republic for a treaty of annexation. In his annual message to Congress, in December, 1843, Tyler said nothing about these negotiations, but he did refer to the long continued state of war between Mexico and Texas and hint at the possibility of American interference to end it.[2]

In private, members of the Administration told important southern and western Democrats about the treaty which was being negotiated. Newspapers, including the Washington Madisonian, which was the administration spokesman, had been discussing the idea of annexation for weeks and continued to do so during the session of Congress. Members of Congress heard and repeated rumors about the treaty. Speculators in Texan bonds and lands sought inside information about it. So, although the subject was not formally introduced in Congress either by the Administration or any member, and although discussion about Texas died down somewhat during mid-winter, politicians expected President Tyler to submit a treaty of annexation to the Senate before the session ended. Annexation was certain to be an issue in the election of 1844.[3]

In October, 1843, even before Tyler's message to Congress, Virginia Democratic leaders had alerted Van Buren to prepare to deal with the question of annexation. Henry A. Wise, a Virginian who was President Tyler's chief supporter in the House of Representatives, had raised the Texas issue in a letter to a meeting in King William's county, Virginia, in honor of R. M. T. Hunter. In a speech to the meeting Hunter had also advocated

annexation. Reports of the King William's county meeting aroused John Letcher, a pro-Van Buren Democrat, who had heard, but had not previously been impressed by, a Whig rumor of a plot to use the Texas issue against the Magician. According to this story, the Calhoun men had secured a letter from ex-President Andrew Jackson enthusiastically endorsing annexation; they planned to obtain Van Buren's opinion on the subject and, if it was adverse to annexation, as they suspected it would be, they would publish both letters just before the Democratic national convention. Though still skeptical, Letcher decided after the King William's meeting to let better informed leaders of his faction judge the truth of the story he had heard, and so he passed it on to Thomas Ritchie. Ritchie, William H. Roane, and Andrew Stevenson decided, in turn, that Van Buren should be warned. They were convinced that the issue would be raised in some form before the presidential election, and they wanted the Magician to be prepared for it. They said that they could not remember what position Van Buren had taken on the subject during the 1830's and they did not advise him now, except to be cautious, but Roane expressed his personal opposition to annexation.[4]

Jackson's letter, which was supposed to be involved in the alleged plot of the Calhoun men, was actually in the hands, as it had been for some months, of Van Buren's good friend, Frank Blair. Thomas W. Gilmer of Virginia, to whose own public letter on the subject Jackson had responded in February, 1843, had given Jackson's letter to Blair to print in the Globe. Preferring not to raise any new issue before the election, Blair had not published

Jackson's letter. By November, 1843, however, he was convinced that Tyler was going to make a treaty with Texas and he told a friend, who passed the word to Van Buren, that he was looking for some excuse to announce his own advocacy of annexation before Tyler raised the issue.[5]

Van Buren did not respond to either of these hints that he should make up his mind about annexation; indeed, as late as April 8, 1844, not even Senator Wright knew what the Magician's views on the subject were.[6] Van Buren's response to Texas's request for admission to the Union in 1837 was, however, a matter of public record. The formal reply of the United States to the Texan proposal had been made, of course, by the Secretary of State, John Forsyth; but it had been made on Van Buren's instructions. It had been communicated to the Senate and published soon after it was made.

Forsyth had begun by referring to the sympathy of the American people with Texas, but had added that the federal government had always followed a policy of "rigid impartiality" in regard to the Texan Revolution. He had also strongly implied that the admission of an independent nation into the Union would be unconstitutional, but had then dismissed that aspect of the subject by announcing that the President considered it inexpedient to raise the issue of constitutionality at that time. Then Forsyth had flatly rejected Texas's proposition on the grounds that the United States was at peace with Mexico and had made a treaty of amity with that country, that Mexico had not recognized the independence of Texas and was still trying to subdue the Texan rebellion, and

that the United States could not even reserve judgment on the proposition of annexing Texas without being justly suspected of violating the spirit of its treaty with Mexico.[7]

Forsyth had said nothing about slavery, but the Texan Minister to the United States had been convinced that it was the real reason for Van Buren's decision; he had also believed that the Magician was fully justified in deciding as he had because of the political status of slavery. The previous Congress had been deeply agitated by disputes over slavery, particularly about the reception by Congress of anti-slavery petitions and the use of the mails to introduce abolitionist propaganda into the South. During the session of Congress immediately preceding Van Buren's inauguration, and again at the special session of 1837 and at the regular session of 1837-1838, northern anti-slavery societies and state legislatures had bombarded Congress with petitions and memorials against annexation on the express grounds that it would extend slavery and increase the political influence of slave-owners. Van Buren had already risked his influence in the Northeast by announcing, in his inaugural address, his opposition to congressional interference with slavery in the District of Columbia. He was naturally unwilling, in the midst of his efforts to deal with the Panic of 1837, to weaken his position in the North still further by any additional action favorable to the South on an issue involving slavery.[8]

The reaction in the Northeast to the renewed talk of annexation during the early 1840's could not have encouraged Van Buren to reverse his earlier stand. Indeed, so opposed to

annexation were the abolitionists and such anti-slavery politicians as John Quincy Adams, and so vociferous were they in stating their views, that they did as much as the annexationists to keep the subject in the newspapers during 1842 and 1843. A reference to Texas in Tyler's message to Congress in December, 1841, coupled with a pro-annexation speech by Henry A. Wise in January, 1842, provoked bitter responses by William Lloyd Garrison and by the Liberty party in Boston. Later in the year Adams warned his Massachusetts constituents of an elaborate conspiracy, which he said had long been in operation, to steal territory from Mexico and introduce slavery into it. Gilmer's pro-annexation letter, published early in 1843, provoked a new outburst by Adams, who joined a dozen other members of Congress in announcing that annexation "would be identical with dissolution" of the Union. The Massachusetts legislature responded in a tone that was moderate only in comparison to Adams's, and soon afterwards the Vermont legislature repeated, in equally forceful language, the objections to annexation which it had voiced more than once before. After Congress met in December, 1843, the presentation of these and other legislative memorials and of numerous petitions from anti-slavery societies demonstrated that annexation was no more acceptable in the Northeast than it had been six years before.[9]

* * *

Nor had Southerners and Westerners, who had generally favored admitting Texas to the Union in 1837, changed their minds. The arguments of the Madisonian and other Tylerite newspapers in favor of annexation were not needed to convince the citizens of

such states as Tennessee, from which many Texans had emigrated, that their relatives and former neighbors should be received back into the Union.[10] All that was required to start a formidable annexation movement was publicity. Something special in the way of publicity was needed, however, to overcome the opposition of Northerners and to win the active support of southern politicians who, although in favor of annexation, opposed the agitation of the question because it would divide their party sectionally.

Senator Robert J. Walker of Mississippi was just the man to call the attention of the whole country to the subject and to give it a broad, national appeal. He was a well-known and influential member of the Senate and a man of energy, imagination, and great skill as a publicist. Further, he was personally suited to speak for annexation from a national rather than sectional point of view: he had been born and brought up in a northern state, Pennsylvania; he had been a Jackson man almost from the beginning of his political career; and he had supported the Van Buren Administration. Consequently, he had far more influence with northern Democrats than did Tyler, Wise, or Gilmer.[11]

Walker presented his argument for annexation in the form of a letter to a group of Kentuckians who had asked for his opinion. His letter appeared in the Globe early in February, 1844, and in pamphlet form at about the same time; it was widely reprinted. Walker emphasized the military threat to the nation, and especially to the West, of a British alliance with Texas. He warned Southerners that the British would make emancipation a condition of their financial aid to Texas, which was too poor to

refuse such a demand, and that Texas would thus become a haven for run-away slaves, a base for abolitionists, and a standing provocation to slave insurrections in the South. To Northeasterners Walker pointed out that slavery already existed in Texas and so would not be extended by annexation. He made an elaborate effort to prove, furthermore, that soil exhaustion in the older slave states would encourage the removal of all slaves to Texas, if it was annexed, where they would eventually be emancipated (when the soil of Texas, too, was exhausted by continuous cultivation of cotton) and would move on to the South into Mexico and Central America. But if Texas was abolitionized, American slaves would, after their inevitable emancipation, go north to compete with white labor. Walker also defended slavery as beneficial to the Negro. Finally, he called attention to the value of the Texas market to northern farmers and manufacturers, to the possibility that United States tariff laws would be rendered ineffective by the smuggling of British goods through Texas, and to the danger to the Union if annexation was defeated by the North for sectional reasons.[12]

Not long after Walker had published his lengthy argument for annexation, Jackson's letter on the subject, which had been written a year before, was finally published. Jackson's case for annexation was brief and based almost entirely on one point, but it was just as national in its appeal as Walker's and was even more influential because of the ex-President's popularity and undoubted patriotism. Jackson graphically described the military danger to New Orleans and, therefore, to the whole West, which would result from a Texan-British alliance. He added that only

annexation of Texas could effectually prevent such an alliance. This warning from the hero of the Battle of New Orleans had a powerful effect in the West.[13]

While Walker, Jackson, and others were propagandizing for annexation, the Tyler Administration was making a treaty with Texas. Secretary of State Abel P. Upshur had begun the negotiation in the fall and by mid-winter had made much progress. Then, on February 28, 1844, Upshur was killed--along with other prominent members of the Administration--by the explosion of a cannon aboard a naval vessel on which the President and his friends were taking an excursion. Upshur's death did not long delay the treaty, however, for Tyler promptly invited John C. Calhoun to fill the vacancy and by the end of March the South Carolinian was in Washington completing Upshur's work. Less than two weeks later the agreement was signed, and on April 22 President Tyler submitted it to the Senate.[14] For Silas Wright and others of Van Buren's close friends in the Senate, there was to be no escaping the new issue and the sectional feeling which it had aroused.

* * *

By then, Martin Van Buren too had become convinced that he must speak out on the subject. He had reached that conclusion early in April. Only a few days earlier he had responded to the urgings of his Virginia friends that he do so by warning them that if he was forced to speak, he would speak plainly and without regard to consequences. But even before the Virginians could answer this blunt letter, the Magician decided that he had no choice. Thomas Ritchie, by giving so much attention to the

subject in the Enquirer, was threatening to make it the major issue in the Virginia legislative election late in April. Van Buren had been pressed to announce his opinion on it not only by Ritchie, but by Blair, by ex-Governor William L. Marcy of New York, and by George Bancroft of Massachusetts. Many other Democrats, especially Southerners, had hinted that he must support annexation. And he had been formally interrogated on the subject by a group of three New York Congressmen and by another member of the House, William H. Hammet of Mississippi.[15] It was Hammet's inquiry which the Magician chose to answer.

One of the many Democrats who had written Van Buren about annexation had urged him to "give no offense to either side."[16] Van Buren knew that could not be done, but he hoped to minimize the damage to his cause which would result from any statement he made on such an issue. He spent nearly two weeks preparing his reply to Hammet, and obtained the aid of several of his friends. He asked Wright and Comptroller Flagg for help in gathering documents and information; he was particularly interested in how such congressional leaders as Henry Clay, Daniel Webster, Calhoun, Wright, Buchanan, and Walker had voted in the years 1836-1838 on propositions to recognize Texan independence and to annex Texas. Wright and Benjamin F. Butler, another old and close friend of Van Buren who visited Washington during the first week of April, also sought information about the effort of Tyler to purchase Texas from Mexico in 1841 and about the current negotiations with Texas. Martin Van Buren, Jr., acted as his father's amanuensis, and James K. Paulding, who had been Van Buren's Secretary of the Navy and had

some repute as an author, edited the final draft of the reply to Hammet.[17]

In the reply, Van Buren began by recounting his own connection with the issue in the past: his participation as Jackson's Secretary of State in efforts to purchase Texas from Mexico in 1829-1830 and his decision, as President, to reject Texas's request for annexation. Then he dealt with Hammet's inquiry "as to the constitutionality and expediency of immediately annexing Texas to the United States . . ." First Van Buren dealt with the question he and Forsyth had avoided in 1837, the constitutionality of annexation, and declared, after a long and detailed discussion, that the project was constitutional.[18]

The expediency of immediate annexation was, however, another matter. After recounting the reasons--at least the official reasons--for his decision against annexation in 1837, the Magician argued that the situation had not changed. The United States still had a treaty of amity with Mexico, and Texas and Mexico were still at war; in fact, the President of Texas, the President of the United States, and the American Secretary of State had all recently admitted that the state of war continued. Van Buren observed that it was a poor way to end such a war, to take the territory over which it was being fought. Mexico was almost certain to declare war on the United States, and other nations, the enemies of republicanism, would accuse the United States of greed and hypocrisy and might even intervene on Mexico's side. While no one should hesitate to fight a war which was really necessary to national honor or safety, Van Buren asserted,

any unnecessary war was morally inexcusable.

Van Buren then warned his fellow citizens against the danger of their being misled into acting unwisely or unjustly because of their relationship to and sympathy for the Texan people. He held up, as an example of proper conduct in such a case, President Jackson's scrupulous neutrality during the first years of the Texan Revolution.

The Magician next turned to the argument that, if Texas was not annexed at once, the opportunity would never come again because Texas would ally itself with Great Britain. He was suspicious of the reports that such an alliance might be made, and he implied that they might be mere rumors circulated by the great private interests involved in annexation--a reference to land speculators, creditors of the Texas Republic, and ambitious politicians who sought popularity by advocating annexation. Whatever a few leading citizens of Texas might want, the Magician refused to believe that the people of the Republic wanted an alliance with Britain, or that Britain would be foolish enough to try to make Texas into a British colony.

Thus far Van Buren had taken a firm stand against immediate annexation. He next suggested that this stand was not irrevocable; just as he had done in 1837, he closed the door to Texas but he did not lock it. If Britain did attempt to control Texas, he said, the United States would be fully justified in conquering the area in self defence. Furthermore, changes in the relations between Texas and Mexico might justify annexation without Mexico's consent--but Van Buren did not specify what possible

changes he had in mind.

Even in raising the hope of future annexation, Van Buren was cautious. In case these unspecified changes in Texan-Mexican relations took place, he did not promise that he would seek to annex Texas, but only that he would act in a manner calculated to produce a good result! In any case, he would not be influenced by sectional feelings, and he offered his past conduct as proof of his lack of such bias. He further observed that it was impossible to say in advance how he would deal with a matter involving other nations, because their conduct would influence his.

The Magician was not content to end on such a mysterious note. He suggested, in closing, that Mexico might persist so stubbornly in its futile efforts to reconquer Texas that a majority of the American people would decide to annex the Republic regardless of consequences. In that case, Van Buren pledged, he would obey the will of the people as expressed by Congress after a full discussion of the subject; and, he observed, such a discussion was already taking place. Finally, Van Buren remarked that his opinions on the subject of annexation might cost him votes. If so, too bad; but he could not "cast a shade over the motives of my past life" by changing or concealing his views on a great national question for the sake of partisan advantage.[19]

Most of this long reply to Hammet was clear enough, and parts of it were boldly statesmanlike, but taken as a whole it was so equivocal as to justify the sneer of one annexationist at its "unmanly prolixity and timidity." The same critic called

it an "anti-Texas letter," and most Democrats who read it--and many others who did not read it--concluded that the Magician opposed annexation.[20] But interpretations differed. Blair, of the Globe, and some other Democrats friendly both to annexation and to Van Buren, understood him to mean that he opposed annexation by means of the treaty which Tyler was negotiating, but would annex Texas himself after he had been elected President if the people really wanted him to do so.[21] And some ardent opponents of annexation damned Van Buren for having sold out to the South.[22]

* * *

To have written such an equivocal statement was a grave error from which Van Buren's usually sound judgment had not protected him because of his personal situation, his emotional response to the issue and the men who had raised it, and his fear of the sectional dispute over slavery which was involved in the question of annexation.

The Magician had been used to being in the midst of his fellow politicians, sensing their moods, keenly deducing their motives, and deriving self confidence from his knowledge of them and the constantly renewed evidence that he could usually predict and therefore make allowances for their conduct. But since March, 1841, he had been out of touch with politicians other than his close associates. Trips to Albany and to Saratoga Springs and his excursion through the South and West in 1842 had been poor substitutes for the constant involvement in active politics which had been his practice before his retirement from the Presidency. Such isolation would frustrate any public man, but especially Van Buren.

To employ his characteristic political technique--not initiating or trying to control the movements of others, but so setting his own course that others, acting on their own impulses and on their predictable responses to his conduct, would push him toward his goal--he had to be in the center of activity. Cut off as he was at Lindenwald, he was unable to function in his usual way and therefore less confident of himself.

While he was out of touch with men, Van Buren was compelled to deal with issues, and with issues which had been raised by men who were unfriendly to him. Van Buren habitually thought of political issues as weapons to use against his enemies or as traps which they had laid for him. Because the Tyler Administration, his enemies, had originated the current annexation movement, and because John C. Calhoun, another enemy, had just taken charge of the negotiations with Texas, Van Buren was suspicious of annexation and especially of the treaty--which he had not seen and the full contents of which he had been unable to learn.

Van Buren also distrusted those Democrats, some of them formerly his friends, who were agitating for annexation. The treaty was certain to divide the party and to be unpopular in New England, New York, and Ohio, where Van Buren was strongest. If he opposed it, he would weaken his position as leader of the Democratic party nationally; if he favored it, he would reduce the strength of his faction in the Northeast on which his national position depended. Consequently, the Magician suspected those whose agitation of the subject had forced him to take a stand on

it of harboring a desire to injure him, and his suspicion of their motives increased his inclination to oppose the measure they advocated.[23]

Van Buren also hesitated to endorse annexation because of the existence of slavery in Texas, which caused many Northerners to oppose the measure. Silas Wright, expressing Van Buren's own thoughts on the matter, had warned a Virginia politician early in April that "the Tariff and the [Gag] Rule of the House had imposed load enough upon us, of that sectional character, for one contest . . ." He feared that the Texas question, if added to the others, "would prove to be not the pea [sic] but the millstone, which would sink the camel rather than simply break his back." Annexation was an issue which had two sides, he warned, and on the one as easily as on the other, "passion might be made to take the place of reason and judgment and even patriotism."[24]

For these reasons the Magician might have flatly rejected annexation, but he did not dare to do so because it was too popular in the South and West. So he had sought some means of holding two opinions--one for, the other against--and had found it in Hammet's reference to annexing Texas "immediately." Van Buren opposed immediate annexation in his reply to Hammet, but was careful to leave himself free to approve the measure at some future time; he even hinted strongly that he would approve it, and soon.

In making a distinction between the treaty which Tyler and Calhoun were making with Texas and annexation as a hypothetical future proposition, Van Buren was not merely quibbling.

He had not seen the treaty; he did not even have official knowledge that it existed. Nor did he have any evidence of British efforts to control Texas, which was the professed reason for immediate annexation. These considerations had inspired the advice which some friend--possibly Benjamin F. Butler or Azariah C. Flagg--had given Van Buren and which Martin, Jr., had written down for his father's use. "Make a short answer," this adviser said, and say that while you do not know whether or not the British are trying to control Texas, the United States should exercise "a most jealous vigilance" against such a danger and that, rather than let Texas become a British dependency or colony, you "would in a co[nstitu]tional and proper manner, . . . bring her into the Union."[25] Van Buren made use of this suggestion, but did not follow it strictly--especially not the part about the length of his reply. He preferred to complicate the issue even more than his adviser had proposed to do, and leave himself uncommitted as to his future course if this or that hypothetical event should take place.

Van Buren was so careful not only because he feared how northern voters would react to his reply to Hammet, but also because he feared the effect in the North of the interpretations which might be placed on his reply by his annexationist friends in the South. Rather than let Great Britain control Texas, many Northerners would suppress their objections to admitting another slave state into the Union.[26] But Van Buren still had to be careful even in expressing a qualified or conditional approval of annexation because of the eagerness of his southern friends to

prove to their constituents that he was a northern man with southern principles. If his reply to Hammet could possibly be represented as approving immediate annexation by means of the treaty which was being negotiated by the Tyler Administration, it would be so interpreted in the South, and his enemies in the North would thus be strengthened at his expense.

Van Buren had already been embarrassed by the willingness of Thomas Ritchie to conduct Virginia politics as though Van Buren's popularity in other states was of no consequence. By publishing Van Buren's private letter on the tariff, which the northern Whig press had delightedly and extensively reprinted, the Virginia editor had seriously embarrassed the Magician.[27] More recently, Ritchie had come very close to repeating the mistake, by making a reference, which fortunately escaped the notice of the Whigs, to another of Van Buren's confidential letters.[28] Van Buren's fear of the interpretations which might be placed on his reply to Hammet, and of the publicity which those interpretations might be given, by such foolish friends as Thomas Ritchie, was, therefore, justified.

But in this case Van Buren was too cautious. By trying to protect himself against his southern supporters at the same time that he tried to satisfy them without too much antagonizing his northern supporters, he left himself at the mercy of his enemies. His reply to Hammet was so vague and contradictory as to enable them either to denounce his non-committallism or to give his letter whatever interpretation would be most unpopular in any particular locality.

* * *

The timing of the publication of Van Buren's reply to Hammet greatly increased the opposition to it. The letter-writing campaign of the Cass men, to prove the Magician's unpopularity, had been under way for many weeks and had begun to frighten some Democratic Congressmen. And early in April the Democrats had lost the state election in Connecticut and the town and city elections in New York, which had provoked a new cry that Van Buren could not win.[29] What was more, the McKay bill to reduce the tariff still had not been brought to a vote in the House of Representatives. The Democratic leaders had been trying all during the week before the publication of the reply to get the bill out of the Committee of the Whole, but they had been thwarted by the opposition of some northern Democrats and by the absence of some Southerners. The sectional dispute over the tariff had been further complicated, and embittered, by the refusal of a bloc of Westerners to vote for the McKay bill unless a rivers and harbors appropriations bill passed first. With the national convention only a month away, fear of defeat in the presidential election because of the tariff issue was rising in all sections of the party.[30] And it was just such fear which caused many southern and western Democrats to be so insistent on annexation and so many of their northern colleagues to be so set against it.

What was more, a public letter by Henry Clay flatly opposing annexation appeared in the National Intelligencer on the morning of the day, April 27, 1844, that Van Buren's reply to Hammet was printed in the late night edition of the Washington

Globe. While Democrats at Washington were jubilating over the effect which Clay's letter would have in the South and West, Van Buren's letter to Hammet appeared, turning their joy into shock and despair. As the mails carried first the one piece of news and then the other over the country, Democrats elsewhere experienced the same sudden succession of elation and disappointment. In Nashville, Tennessee, for example, annexationist Democrats had just held a pro-Texas meeting when copies of the reply to Hammet arrived. The next day, while some of the local Democratic leaders rushed off to the Hermitage to consult with ex-President Jackson, the rest stayed in hiding to avoid the anxious questions of the rank and file.[31]

The response in Washington was hysterical. The Calhoun men, the friends of President Tyler, and those who had been active in the Cass and Johnson campaigns all agreed that Van Buren could not possibly be elected because of his opposition to annexation. Soon they were talking about a letter to the Magician, demanding his withdrawal from the race, which sixty or more Congressmen were supposed to have signed. Van Buren's friends were also excited. Some voiced angry threats against the annexationists; others were so frightened by the clamor against him that they advised him to give up at once.[32]

The dispute among the Democrats at Washington was soon further embittered by another unhappy coincidence. Secretary of State Calhoun, while completing the treaty with Texas, had exchanged letters with the British Minister to the United States, Richard Pakenham, about the alleged effort of Great Britain to

abolitionize Texas and about slavery in general. In his last letter to Pakenham, Calhoun undertook to prove that slavery was a blessing to both races, and he further argued that the annexation of Texas was a positive duty of the United States because emancipation in Texas would endanger slavery in the South which, under the Constitution, the federal government was obligated to defend. This letter was among the documents submitted to the Senate with the Treaty of Annexation. Senator Benjamin Tappan of Ohio, an anti-slavery, pro-Van Buren Democrat, violated the rule of secrecy of the Senate and gave copies of the treaty and attached correspondence, including Calhoun's letter to Pakenham, to the New York Evening Post. They were published by the Post on April 27, the same day that the reply to Hamnet was printed by the Globe.[33]

In response to Calhoun's letter to Pakenham, Senator Thomas Hart Benton, Van Buren's excitable friend from Missouri, added his own to the growing list of controversial publications. In the Globe, Benton freely indulged his longstanding hatred of Calhoun. He claimed that Texas had originally been part of the Louisiana Purchase and that Calhoun, as a member of President James Monroe's Cabinet, had participated in the cession of Texas to Spain in the boundary treaty of 1819. He also implied that Calhoun's motives for injecting the slavery issue into the controversy were treasonous. In conversation, Benton was equally unrestrained, violently denouncing Calhoun, Tyler, and other annexationists and charging them with plotting to profit from Texan bonds and lands, to thwart the popular will in regard to

the Presidency, and to disrupt the Union.[34]

Other Democrats took up the quarrel. Senator William Allen of Ohio, another Van Burenite and the "No. 1 roarer" in the Senate in the opinion of one of his colleagues, was even more offensive and aggressive than Benton, and the Globe declared editorial war upon the Spectator, a Calhoun paper. Early in May the Democratic Congressmen from Ohio published a denunciation of "the concerted effort" to undermine Van Buren's popularity. The Indiana delegation replied, admitting that there had been efforts to prevent the Magician's renomination but denying that they were either improper or concerted.[35]

While these exchanges and accusations embittered the two factions of the party, the Whigs won the legislative election in Virginia. Panicking, Thomas Ritchie and his friends at Richmond called an emergency meeting of the Shockoe Hill Democratic Association, the local party organization, and resolved that the Virginia delegates to the national convention should be freed of their instructions to vote for Van Buren. On the 6th of May, Senator Wright sadly wrote Van Buren from Washington that "the state of things here is as bad as it can be."[36] The bandwagon had come to a full halt, and many annexationist Democrats were jumping off.

* * *

Yet not all Democrats who favored annexation accepted the prevailing interpretation of the reply to Hammet or the conclusion that the party must not nominate Van Buren. Robert Armstrong, who had long been a Democratic leader in Tennessee, argued that the Magician was "on the whole . . . nearer to us on the

Texan question than any [other] northern man . . ." He could not understand why southern Democrats could not support Van Buren as willingly as southern Whigs were supporting Henry Clay, who had been unequivocal in his opposition to annexation. Congressman Cave Johnson of Tennessee insisted on distinquishing, as Van Buren had, between annexation and the Treaty: "the Treaty is dead," he argued, "but annexation as soon as practicable and Van upon the principles of his letter, the best man to secure it . . . [are] the true principles for our state . . ." J. F. H. Claiborne of Mississippi insisted that Van Buren was "the real annexation candidate." In Springfield, Illinois, William Lee D. Ewing, the chairman of the Democratic state convention of January, 1843, favored annexation but did not assail or desert Van Buren. Instead he and other pro-Texas Democrats won converts from among the pro-Texas Whigs by arguing that Van Buren favored annexation if the people wanted it, while Clay was unalterably opposed to it.[37]

Such responses to Van Buren's reply to Hamnet were exceptional, but that they were made, and made by experienced and responsible leaders of the party, showed that the angry reaction of most annexationist Democrats was not entirely due to the deficiencies of the reply. They read it--if they read it at all--with a predisposition to find fault with its author unless he boldly and unconditionally advocated immediate annexation.

Wright and other faithful friends of Van Buren attributed this predisposition to some great conspiracy against Van Buren, or the unity of the Democratic party, or the will of the people, or the existence of the Union, or all of them at once.

the victory of Van Buren's friends at the House caucus in December, which had caused some Democrats in Congress to feel that the tariff and petition questions could not safely be compromised, and which had made Van Buren himself afraid to speak out on any issue, including annexation, until he was forced to do so. Democrats had long feared that their party would be defeated or disrupted or both; fear of defeat had finally proved stronger than fear of disruption, not because the latter danger had lessened--indeed, the angry dispute over the reply to Hammet proved that it was greater than ever--but because Democrats could no longer bear the frustration of being caught in such a dilemma and because the unlucky Magician had disappointed their unwarranted hope that, by some feat of political prestidigitation, he would save them from both dangers at once.

## CHAPTER VIII

## THE RE-ORGANIZATION OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY

> "Our delegation will be firm and do everything we can to stay the torrent. But Texas has done the business. . . . the present prospect for New York and the party is damned bad."
>
> John T. Hudson of New York
> May 27, 1844[1]

At the caucus of the Democratic members of the House in December, 1843, they had shown their desire to unite, not for the benefit of Van Buren or any other presidential candidate, but for their own benefit as individuals and as a party. Democrats had thus begun the process of re-organization of their party. Under the leadership of Andrew Jackson it had been little more than the electioneering organization of a popular President. For several years after his retirement, in the absence of any leader capable of taking his place, the party had been held together around its platform by the pressure of the opposition, and when that opposition had weakened, the party had seemed about to disintegrate. But instead of disintegrating the party had survived, not because it had found a new leader like Jackson, but because its politician-members had demonstrated a general desire that it be preserved--a desire for union, arising not so much from sentiments of loyalty to the party or deep commitment to its platform

as from considerations of necessity and expediency very much like those which had dictated the original formation of the American Union.

But the American Democracy was much more truly federal in its organization that the United States of America. Each state component of the party could win even as the party as a whole lost, and it could win control of extensive powers and patronage if it captured a state government. Such a party, if it was to survive, required a leadership able and willing to moderate, to balance, and to conciliate its component elements. And some Democrats, both Northerners and Southerners, had, by their uncompromising sectionalism on the tariff and annexation issues, made that sort of leadership especially necessary to the Democratic party in 1844.

Martin Van Buren had not supplied such leadership; and so, as the Democratic national convention of May, 1844, approached, both his presidential candidacy and the continued existence of the party were in jeopardy.

* * *

Swept along by their anger at Van Buren, many annexationist Democrats publicly committed themselves, during the month after the publication of his reply to Hammet, against his renomination. More precisely, they committed themselves to insist on annexation and to choose their presidential candidate accordingly.[2] Instead of forming the party around a candidate, as the Federalist party had been formed around George Washington, the Republican party around Thomas Jefferson, and the Democratic party around

Andrew Jackson, these annexationist Democrats were insisting that their party be re-organized around a measure and that its presidential nominee be an advocate of that measure.

So to insist was a very human response to their situation, but it was quite unrealistic. A majority of the delegates to the Democratic national convention had been instructed by their state conventions to vote for Van Buren, and there was not time for new instructions to be obtained. If delegates violated their instructions the convention would be discredited and probably disrupted. If they obeyed them, Van Buren would be nominated on the first ballot.

The first plan of the annexationists to solve this problem was to force the Magician to withdraw his own name from the convention by bombarding him with evidences of his unpopularity, as they had unsuccessfully attempted to do before. In response to their renewed efforts, Van Buren again showed that he understood how, by playing the role of political martyr, he might strengthen his own position. He rebuked those who urged him to betray his "duty to the Democratic Cause;" he added that, because he did not seek the nomination and would accept it only out of a sense of obligation to the party, he would not be mortified if he failed to get it.[3] The Magician was not going to be frightened into surrender by threats of humiliation.

The annexationists therefore decided to insist upon the adoption of a two-thirds rule at the national convention. In 1832, when the party's first national convention had nominated Van Buren to the Vice Presidency, and in 1835, when the second

national convention nominated him to the Presidency, his managers had proposed that a two-thirds majority be required. They had done so to refute charges that he was not really the choice of the party. Now his enemies insisted that these precedents be followed. If they were followed, Van Buren almost certainly could not be nominated; if they were not followed, the annexationists warned, the convention would break up. Their threat was ominous because a convention of the supporters of President Tyler would be meeting in Baltimore at the same time as the Democrats and it would be easy for seceders from the Democratic meeting to join the Tylerites in establishing a pro-Texas third party.[4]

But even if they succeeded in adopting the two-thirds rule and thus defeated Van Buren, the annexationists would still face serious problems. To begin with, they were not agreed on an alternative candidate. While many of them were willing to support any annexationist, others were determined to turn the reaction against Van Buren to the benefit of their respective favorites. Lewis Cass, James Buchanan, Richard M. Johnson, and Senator Levi M. Woodbury of New Hampshire had all endorsed annexation, and President Tyler and Secretary of State Calhoun were, of course, closely associated with the measure.[5] Buchanan would not renew his candidacy while Van Buren remained in the race, and Calhoun persisted in refusing to have anything to do with the Democratic convention; but their supporters, like those of the other annexationist candidates, were determined that they should be nominated.[6] Still other annexationists were talking of Commodore Robert Stewart, whose name had scarcely been mentioned since 1841.[7]

Furthermore, even if the annexationists agreed on a single candidate, the Van Buren men would have strength enough--and might be angry enough--to prevent any Texas candidate from getting a two-thirds majority.[8] There was no assurrance, therefore, that concentration of the annexationist support on a single candidate would prevent a deadlock if the two-thirds rule was adopted.

The annexationists might avoid giving the Van Buren men the power to prevent a nomination by driving them out of the party, but the result would then probably be the defeat of the Democratic nominee in the election. If they left the party themselves the annexationists would be just as bad off. In their anger at the Magician's reply to Hammet, the immediate annexationists were taking a position which threatened not only Van Buren, but also themselves, and above all the unity and success of the party.

* * *

Some of Van Buren's friends were ready to take a similar position: they were determined not to yield an inch on the Texas question. A few of them felt that way because of their opposition to slavery.[9] Many others, regardless of their personal feelings, believed that any retreat from the stand Van Buren had taken in his reply to Hammet would defeat them in their state elections. The Treaty of Annexation, warned Silas Wright, had been "made upon a record"--he referred to Calhoun's letter to Pakenham --"which is sure to destroy any man from a free state who will go for it . . ." Henry Simpson of Philadelphia believed that any other course than that taken by the Magician would have lost New

York and Pennsylvania. A. C. Flagg of New York said that for the party to abandon Van Buren because of his opposition to annexation "would be suicidal and give the entire North to Mr. Clay." In preparing the reply, Van Buren had gone as far in conciliating the annexationists as he dared, and many of his friends agreed that any further concession to them would be disastrous.[10]

Even if they had felt able to make further concessions safely, some of Van Buren's friends would have been reluctant to do so because of their anger at the annexationists, especially in the South. If Thomas Ritchie and other southern Democrats were "determined to separate from those who have acted with them for the last thirty years," growled Flagg, " . . . on their heads must rest the responsibility of nominating a third candidate and defeating the Democratic party . . ." Senator Wright, though seeking to draft a platform plank on annexation which would placate the annexationists, shared Flagg's feelings of resentment. " . . . I cannot advise [you] to throw away the North to offer a doubtful conciliation to the South," he told Benjamin F. Butler. He had been trying to do that on the anti-slavery petition and tariff questions all winter, he added, "and the return is so ungrateful that, on this new issue, I am looking at home some and not South at all . . ."[11]

A few of the Van Buren men did propose to withdraw him from the presidential race and turn to Cass, Stewart, or, best of all, Silas Wright.[12] But such leaders of the faction as Wright and Flagg bluntly and unequivocally rejected such suggestions. Flagg felt that "no earthly consideration" should induce Wright to accept the nomination if Van Buren was rejected; and the

Magician's faithful friend agreed. If Van Buren was not nominated, Wright said, "our party is dismembered, disbanded, and defeated." To abandon Van Buren, he added, would be "to abandon principle and honor and character, and to throw off the heart and soul, and bone and sinew of the party, and to surrender to rotten rogues, under whom victory would be our worst defeat."[13] Van Buren himself wanted Wright to be ready to serve as a substitute candidate, but the Senator was adamant.[14] Wright and most of the other Van Buren men were as determined to base the party on his candidacy as the annexationists were to re-organize it around their favorite measure.

* * *

While a few of the Magician's friends were so opposed to slavery or so angry at the southern wing of the party as to welcome its disruption, and while most of them were unwilling either to give up Van Buren or to repudiate any part of his reply to Hammet in order to prevent the disruption of the party, many of them did look for some way to counteract the bad effect of the reply and thus re-unify the party behind the Magician. During the month between the publication of the reply and the meeting of the national convention they considered a number of plans of action which, by reducing the opposition to Van Buren, might save both him and the party.

One such plan, particularly favored by Van Buren's friends in the West, was that he take a strong stand on the Oregon question. Among British-hating and land-hungry Westerners, the demand for "all of Oregon" was as popular as the proposed annexation of Texas, and some of Van Buren's friends were already trying

either to link the two measures or else to employ Oregon as an antidote to the Texas fever.[15] Either tactic would help the Magician in the West, provided he took a strong stand for Oregon.

The Central Democratic Club of Indianapolis pointed the way in resolutions which they adopted on May 11. They charged that Secretary of State Calhoun's offer to divide Oregon with Britain was an attempt "to purchase [Britain's] silence in regard to the annexation of Texas as a Slave Territory," which was a "scheme of infamy." The Democrats of Columbus, Ohio, took up the theme at a meeting on May 18, when they denounced Southerners for "running mad . . . for new possessions" while Oregon, which they said was indisputably American territory, was defiled by British occupation.[16]

The Oregon movement had been gathering momentum for months and Van Buren had, in October, 1843, responded to a request for his opinion on the matter. He had affirmed the American claim to Oregon but had not used language inconsistent with the division of the country between the United States and Britain, nor had he proposed that the treaty of joint occupation be revoked, as many enthusiasts for Oregon were demanding. Instead he had referred to his conduct, while President, in regard to the boundary dispute between Maine and Canada, as evidence of the manner in which he could be expected to deal with similar problems in the future.[17] Since Van Buren's chief goal in the Maine dispute had been to avoid war, this statement was not satisfactory to Westerners, especially after the publication of the reply to Hammet. Unless Van Buren was willing to change his position, his friends could

not very well use the Oregon issue to save him, either by offering the annexationists a sectional deal or by using the heat of the Oregon agitation to start a fire in the rear of the annexationists in the West.

So, on April 30, A. C. Dodge, the son of the Delegate to Congress from Wisconsin Territory, addressed a new series of questions about Oregon to the Magician. Dodge explained that he did so "solely with the view of eliciting such a reply as will tend to advance your interests both for nomination and election . . ."[18] But Van Buren would not seize the opportunity. After considering Dodge's questionnaire for two weeks, he asked Senator Wright to convey to Dodge his refusal to reply. He added that, if he must be questioned about Oregon, the inquiry should be so worded that he would not have to refer to any particular method of settling the dispute which had been introduced as a bill in Congress or which might be adopted in negotiations with Great Britain.[19] He was no more willing to advocate a policy which might bring war with Great Britain--which was, of course, just the sort of policy which Dodge hoped he would endorse--than he had been to advocate annexation of Texas while it was at war with Mexico.

William H. Haywood, the newly elected Senator from North Carolina, and Moses Dawson, an old Jacksonian Democrat from Cincinnati, Ohio, proposed another approach to Van Buren's problem: they wanted him to restore his popularity by writing a new letter about Texas! And each of them had thought of a way of justifying what would otherwise seem a retraction of the Magician's previously announced position on the subject. Dawson thought Van

Buren might base his new letter on the fact that a previously existing armistice between Mexico and Texas had been suspended, or on new information he had received of British designs on Texas. Haywood's reasoning was more elaborate; the documents connected with the Treaty of Annexation, which had been published by the New York Evening Post, showed, he argued, that the Tyler Administration had seduced Texas into a dangerous position relative to Mexico, on the assurrance of annexation; by confirming Calhoun's appointment as Secretary of State the Senate had made itself a party to the commitment to Texas; to reject the Treaty would, therefore, be to break faith with Texas. Haywood admitted that he himself was not convinced by this line of reasoning, but he hoped Van Buren might make something out of it. Van Buren was not convinced either. Both Dawson and Haywood had referred to information derived from the documents published by the Post, which documents included Calhoun's letter to Pakenham.[20] And that letter based annexation on the duty of the federal government to preserve slavery.

Wiser counselors realized that there was plenty of room, within the limits of the position taken by Van Buren in his reply to Hammet, to make some accomodation with the annexationists. That was one reason why the Van Buren men had interpreted the criticism of the reply as evidence of a conspiracy against Van Buren. Some southern and western Democrats had already endorsed the Magician's position--after giving it an interpretation consistent with their own views--and his friends hoped that others could be persuaded to do so. Once Van Buren was nominated, Samuel J.

Tilden of New York believed, annexationist Democrats would re-read the reply to Hammet "and read it a great deal more favorably to their side of the question than before--and, putting the best view of it before the people, will take a stand upon its grounds."[21] But Van Buren could not be nominated if the two-thirds rule was adopted, so the problem was to get the annexationists to re-read the reply at once, before the convention met.

Some of the Magician's associates relied upon Andrew Jackson to render the reply palatable to the annexationists. They depended on his friendship to Van Buren and his great influence over the advocates of immediate annexation. Jackson's own letter on the subject was more than year old when it was published, and had been written in ignorance of Van Buren's views and without reference to the Treaty which was before the Senate. Perhaps he would make a new statement, in some way upholding the Magician.

Benjamin F. Butler had visited Jackson in the latter part of April, just before the reply was published, and had discussed the subject with him, presenting arguments against immediate annexation very similar to those in the reply. Butler had particularly emphasized the importance of obtaining the consent of Mexico before annexing Texas, and Jackson had agreed, saying that Mexico's consent could be had. Butler therefore believed that Jackson would endorse Van Buren's statement as setting forth the only honorable and practical way to get Texas into the Union. Wright, too, was optimistic that the ex-President would once more lend his popularity and prestige to Van Buren's cause.[22]

They were disappointed. In a public letter written

May 13 in answer to many inquiries he had received on the subject, Jackson said that he had not changed his mind about the necessity of immediate annexation; it was, he asserted, "a fact" that if Texas was not "speedily admitted" to the Union it would make an alliance with Britain or France which would be "highly injurious and probably hostile" to the United States. He added that no difference of opinion could weaken his great regard for Van Buren's character, but he concluded by suggesting that the Magician had prepared his reply to Hamnet without considering the recently disclosed danger of foreign influence in Texas.[23] Jackson had failed to save Van Buren and the party from the divisive effect of the Texas issue.

* * *

There was nothing left for Van Buren and his friends to do but to prepare for the worst at the national convention. The Magician chose Butler as his manager in the convention at Baltimore while Wright, at Washington, remained in overall charge of the campaign. Wright's plan was to oppose adoption of the two-thirds rule, for he knew that Van Buren could not get that many votes and he believed that the rule was proposed for the sole purpose of breaking up the convention. To defeat the rule it was essential that the Magician's forces control the organization of the convention, and the key step in the process of organization was the selection of the temporary chairman, so Wright advised Butler to handpick a temporary chairman in advance.[24] The Senator further advised that the temporary chairman by provided beforehand with the names of the rules committee--friendly delegations could

choose their own members, but reliable men would have to be found in as many of the unfriendly delegations as possible. Even with the rules committee packed, it was essential that the permanent chairman be opposed to the two-thirds rule; Wright suggested Congressman George C. Dromgoole of Virginia for that post. When sober he was a master of parliamentary tactics.[25]

If the two-thirds rule was defeated, Wright and his advisers expected that at least some of the annexationists would bolt the convention and join with the friends of President Tyler--who would be holding their own convention in Baltimore at the same time as the Democrats--either in support of Tyler or Calhoun on a third, pro-Texas ticket. Such a secession from the Democratic party might defeat Van Buren, but he had almost no chance to be nominated if the two-thirds rule was adopted. Besides, if the rule was defeated, the annexationists would have to choose between supporting Van Buren or leaving the party to oppose him when he had a clear majority of the votes in the convention. Wright did not believe that many of them would have the courage to bolt under such circumstances.[26]

Wright did not tell Butler what to do if the two-thirds rule was adopted, but he did predict that a majority of the delegates would not dare to adjourn without making a nomination, and that if any nomination was made, Van Buren had as good a chance as anyone to get it. And he repeatedly urged that the New York delegation stick to Van Buren even if he seemed to have no chance, until they could clearly see what the effect would be of withdrawing his name.[27]

To complete their plans for the convention, Wright and Butler both drafted platform resolutions on Texas and Oregon. They still hoped to placate the annexationists on one hand, and to reduce the northern opposition to annexation, on the other hand, by connecting it with a proposal for settlement of the Oregon question.[28]

While Wright and Butler planned their strategy to nominate Van Buren, Cave Johnson of Tennessee and other Van Buren men in Washington, believing that the two-thirds rule was certain to be adopted and that a deadlock would result, were developing a scheme to save the party by nominating Wright. Once it had been established that no candidate could get a two-thirds majority, the Van Buren men would invite the annexationists to agree on an alternative to the Magician. They would not be able to do so--the friends of Calhoun and Buchanan would not accept Cass, and so on--and then, Johnson believed, it would be easy to get general agreement on Wright, whose platform plank on Texas would satisfy the annexationists.[29]

Wright himself was absolutely opposed to Johnson's plan. He was unwilling to gain by Van Buren's defeat, and he feared that even the mention of himself as a compromise candidate would weaken the determination of the New York delegation to stand by the Magician. To prevent that, Wright gave to Judge John Fine, his personal friend and a member of the New York delegation, a letter in which he unconditionally declined nomination and professed his own full agreement with every word of Van Buren's reply to Hammet. And Wright made Fine promise to read this letter to the convention the moment Wright's name was mentioned.[30]

Thus Wright burned the bridges of the Van Buren men; he was determined that there should be no retreat. But the annexationists were equally determined that the Magician should not be nominated. And so, as the delegates to the Democratic national convention gathered in Baltimore, many of them wondered, and with good reason, whether any nomination would be made--whether the Democratic party would survive.

* * *

The proceedings of the convention during its first two days, on Monday and Tuesday, May 27 and 28, deepened the fears of the anxious Democrats, especially the Van Buren men. Romulus M. Saunders of North Carolina, an annexationist, thwarted the plans of the Magician's friends to control the organization of the convention by calling it to order twenty minutes early and nominating Hendrick B. Wright, a Buchanan man from Pennsylvania, to be chairman pro tempore. Uncertain how the Pennsylvania delegation would vote on the crucial two-thirds rule, the Van Burenites decided not to oppose Wright's election.[31] From that time on the annexationists controlled the convention and, after an excited debate which continued into the morning of the second day, the two-thirds rule was adopted. The entire Tennessee delegation and most of the delegates from Massachusetts, who had not been instructed for Van Buren but had originally been friendly to him, and the delegations from Virginia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Illinois, and Arkansas, and some delegates from Connecticut and Pennsylvania, who had been instructed for Van Buren, voted for the rule and thus insured that he would not be nominated on the first ballot.[32] Those delegates

who were obliged by their instructions to vote for him would be free, after the first ballot, to vote for someone else.[33]

Tuesday afternoon the convention began trying to nominate a presidential candidate. On the first ballot one hundred and forty-six delegates--a clear majority but not two-thirds of the whole number--voted for the Magician. Thereafter his strength declined on each ballot. On the last of the day, the seventh, he received only ninety-nine votes.

Then the indignation of the Van Buren men exploded. An Ohio delegate offered a motion that, since the Magician had received a majority on the first ballot, he be declared the nominee. The chairman ruled the motion out of order. The Ohioan then appealed from the decision of the chair and, jumping onto a table, made an angry speech denouncing the conduct of Van Buren's enemies and threatening to walk out of the convention. Amidst great disorder, Benjamin F. Butler, Van Buren's manager, called on the Ohioan to withdraw his appeal, but he persisted and his colleagues supported him. One of them pulled off his coat and offered to fight. Finally the chairman declared them out of order and the tumult, which had lasted more than an hour, was ended by adjournment.[34]

It was the Magician's friends who had given vent to their feelings, but his opponents were also excited and alarmed. If the bitter struggle continued in the morning, there was great danger that the convention would break up without making a nomination. And if the Van Buren men did not walk out, there still might be no nomination: more than one-third of the delegates had

faithfully voted for him through seven ballots; as long as they continued to do so, no other candidate could be nominated. So, as the delegates went to eat their suppers, they were oppressed by the fear that the convention might be able to nominate nobody.[35]

* * *

During the night, several of the anxious Democrats suddenly remembered that a nobody was available to be nominated. James K. Polk of Tennessee, who was a candidate for the vice presidential nomination, was a nobody in the sense that he had not been involved in the bitter contest for the first place on the ticket; he had not even directly participated in national politics since his election to the Governorship of Tennessee in 1839. From another point of view--and this, too, made him a desirable compromise candidate--Polk was an everybody. He had been a loyal supporter of President Jackson in his war upon the Bank of the United States and of President Van Buren in his effort to establish the Independent Treasury, and he had sought the vice presidential nomination as a Van Buren man. On the other hand, Polk could be considered either a Southerner or a Westerner, through friends in East Tennessee he had kept on good terms with Calhoun, he opposed protective tariffs, and he favored the immediate annexation of Texas.[36]

After Polk had been nominated to the Presidency, a number of Democrats claimed the honor of having launched his candidacy. In fact, several of his friends had discussed the idea long before the convention met, Silas Wright had told Cave Johnson early in May that Polk would be the second choice of the Van Buren men, and in mid-May Jackson had talked openly of Polk as a

compromise candidate. Realizing that in the confusion at Baltimore anything might happen, Polk himself had authorized the Tennessee delegation to make an effort in his behalf and had appointed Gideon J. Pillow to manage it.[37]

Two delegates, one from Pennsylvania and the other from Massachusetts, suggested Polk's nomination to Pillow just before the convention adjourned on Tuesday evening. Pillow was eager to take credit for the nomination after it had been made, but at this point he was cautious. The initiative, he said, ought to be taken by the North. Ira A. Eastman of New Hampshire also proposed Polk as a compromise candidate to Cave Johnson and Congressman Benjamin G. Shields of Alabama late Tuesday night. By Wednesday morning the idea had begun to catch on, and in the first ballot that day, delegates from New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Alabama, and Louisiana gave Polk forty-four votes.[38]

Meanwhile, the desperate Van Buren men had been considering what to do. Butler learned on Tuesday night that Van Buren's strength of about one hundred delegates could not last much longer, and that the Kentucky delegation had decided to drop Colonel Johnson and vote for Cass on the first ballot Wednesday morning. Butler, who had not yet learned of the Polk movement, feared that some of the Magician's supporters might decide that Cass was certain to win and help to give him the required two-thirds majority. To prevent that, Butler planned to withdraw Van Buren and throw New York's thirty-six votes to Silas Wright. He talked to the Van Buren men from Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, and Ohio, and they agreed to the proposal. At midnight

Butler went to bed, but could not sleep because he knew of the unconditional letter of declination which Wright had given to John Fine, who had promised to read it to the convention at the first mention of Wright's name.

Early in the morning Butler wrote to Wright, urging him not to decline a presidential nomination until they could meet and confer; then he called a meeting of the New York delegates, read them a letter of withdrawal which Van Buren had entrusted to him in case it was needed, and proposed Wright's nomination. All the delegates agreed except Fine, who had made a promise and meant to keep it. Consequently, the delegation advised Butler not to withdraw Van Buren.

As the New Yorkers entered the convention, their friends from other states crowded around them to learn their decision. When told the Magician was still in the race, some of them warned Butler that they could not hold their delegations in line much longer. Some of them mentioned Polk's name, and Butler encouraged them to vote for him, in preference to any other candidate. Polk was a sound Democrat, Butler reasoned, with whom the Van Buren men "could make the old issues of Bank or no Bank, etc.;" furthermore, his nomination would defeat the intrigues of "Tyler, Calhoun, Woodbury, Buchanan, Johnson, Stewart, and above all, as most likely otherwise to get the benefit of them, Lewis Cass." On the ensuing first ballot of the day, on which Polk got forty-four votes, Van Buren's tally held up fairly well, but the Rhode Island and Ohio leaders reported to Butler that they could control their delegations no longer. Butler advised them to vote for Polk,

and then asked the chairman to suspend the balloting while the New York delegation caucused.[39]

His request provoked an outcry against "New York dictation" and Butler withdrew it, but the convention dissolved into disorder anyway. Finally Samuel Young of New York got the floor and began to denounce Van Buren's enemies in a bitter, divisive speech. First he claimed that his state, far from trying to dictate, had remained silent on the presidential question until the fall of 1842, while sixteen other states were clamoring for Van Buren's renomination. Next he took up the subject of instructions to delegates, and asserted that if a representative of the people could not obey their wishes, he was honor bound to resign and let them choose another. Then Young predicted that in a few months the Texas fever would die down and the failure of the convention to nominate Van Buren would be generally regretted. Nero fiddled while Rome burned, he added, "and probably the political Nero of this country is exulting over the flame he has raised." "Who is that Nero?" a delegate demanded to know, but Young ignored him and launched into a denunciation of the two-thirds rule. He concluded by moving that it be rescinded, but the chair held that another delegate's motion to proceed with the balloting had been made first. Young then flared up against the "trick" by which he had been deprived of the floor. While Young was delivering this diatribe, his colleagues decided to withdraw for a caucus, and as he followed them out a Georgian called on him again to say who was Nero, and accused him of "meanly skulking out." When chided for his discourtesy, the Georgia delegate defended his choice of words and

offered to be personally responsible for them to Young.

The mood of the great majority of the delegates was expressed neither by Young nor by his belligerent critic, however, but by Henry Hubbard of New Hampshire, who made a speech calling for harmony and James K. Polk. General Benjamin C. Howard of Maryland followed in the same vein, as did Samuel Medary of Ohio, who linked the annexation of Texas to the acquisition of all of Oregon, and both measures to Polk.

At this point the Virginia delegation returned from a caucus and announced that they would vote for Cass only once more and then, if he failed of nomination, they would switch to Polk. The balloting resumed, but after Massachusetts voted Virginia withdrew once more, and the convention relapsed into confusion. Colonel Johnson's manager called out over the hub-bub that, although Kentucky had not voted for him on the previous ballot, Johnson was still a candidate. Eventually the chairman called on Connecticut, which gave its votes to Polk, and then other states were called; but many of them were unprepared to vote.[40]

The return of the Virginians broke the tension. William H. Roane announced their votes for Polk and, while the delegates cheered, Hubbard invited him up to the platform. Roane agreed to come, saying that the first thing he wanted to do was to shake Hubbard's hand. He did so, across the chairman who sat between them, while the delegates cheered even more loudly and waved their handkerchiefs. Then Roane made a speech eulogizing Van Buren and explaining his state's decision--made with

"bleeding heart"--not to support him for renomination.

As Roane spoke the New York delegation returned to the hall. In their caucus they had decided to give up Van Buren, but they had not agreed on an alternative. They had however authorized Butler, in announcing Van Buren's withdrawal, to express his own preference for Polk. As they entered the hall, Roane spoke directly to them, and Butler responded with the announcement that Van Buren was withdrawn. He spoke at length, recounting his personal association with Van Buren; then he announced that he would vote for James K. Polk. When he finished, the chairman of the New York delegation reported that all but one of them would also vote for Polk.

What followed was a stampede. After a series of "corrections" of previously announced votes for other candidates, of disputes over which state should be allowed to vote first, and of painful puns on Polk's name, the chairman announced that Polk had been nominated unanimously. Even the vote of South Carolina, which was not represented in the convention, had been counted for Polk on the authority of Francis W. Pickens and Franklin H. Elmore, two of Calhoun's intimate associates, who were present as spectators.[41]

For more than a month the Democratic party had teetered on the brink of destruction. Only the night before, the protest of the Ohio delegates had reduced the convention to complete disorder. Only minutes before, Samuel Young had given vent to the most rancorous feelings and had argued that the convention should disperse without making a nomination, while a Georgian had

been ready to face Young in a duel. Yet the party had preserved itself.

* * *

It had, indeed, re-organized itself; at the convention Democrats had completed the process of re-organization which had been begun at the House caucus in December, and this time they had been fully conscious of what they were doing. They had decided, before they agreed on James K. Polk as their nominee, that they wanted to preserve their party more than they wanted the nomination of any particular candidate.

The Van Buren men had so decided when they had remained in the convention despite the adoption of the two-thirds rule. They remained, it is true, partly in order to prevent the nomination of any of Van Buren's rivals; but they were also influenced by the consideration that adoption of the rule, plausibly founded as it was on precedents, did not constitute reason enough for disrupting the party in the opinion of the Democratic rank and file. By waiting to walk out of the convention until their opponents gave them a better pretext, the New Yorkers recognized the strength of the desire for party unity among Democrats generally and especially in their own state. And in joining in Polk's nomination they did not so much force a candidate of their own choice on their opponents, which is how they preferred to describe what they had done, as acquiesce in a decision which the convention would have made whether they concurred in it or not. That is, the convention chose Polk and the New York Democrats chose to remain in the party.[42]

Van Buren's friends from other states, some of whom had been eager to turn to Polk even before Van Buren was withdrawn, expressed the prevailing mood of the party even more clearly. If Polk had not been available, some of them would have voted for Cass rather than see the party broken up. On Tuesday night, while Butler was conferring with some of their leaders about sticking to Van Buren or switching to Wright, others of their leaders were talking with Pillow, Johnson, and others about Polk. On Wednesday morning they had prodded the New Yorkers to withdraw Van Buren by repeatedly warning that their delegations were getting out of hand. As angry as some of them were at the immediate annexationists, and as faithful as they were to Van Buren, they cared more for the preservation of the party--and of their own positions in it--than for the nomination of the Magician, just as they had earlier in the campaign.[43]

As for the annexationists, they had not insisted on the two-thirds rule to break up the party, as Van Buren and his friends charged, but in order to get rid of Van Buren without breaking up the party. On several occasions during the debates in the convention over the rule, Robert J. Walker and other annexationists had denied the claims of the Van Buren men that no one could be nominated if the rule was adopted. They believed a compromise candidate acceptable to all factions would be found. Most of them favored Cass, Buchanan, or Levi Woodbury--all northern men. In their eagerness to find an annexationist whom the Van Buren men would support, some of them even suggested the aged ex-President Jackson![44]

Most of the Calhoun men shared in the desire to preserve the Democratic party. South Carolina sent no delegation to the convention, but that was so that they could support the nominee without losing face by consenting to the rejection of the district system by New York and other states. And the Calhoun men from other states than South Carolina were there. All of them, furthermore, had long since demonstrated that they were more concerned about their positions in the party than about making Calhoun President.

As for their leader, Calhoun asserted early in May, and again while the convention was meeting, that it was not the Presidency but Texas which he cared most about. His aim, he said, was "to obtain union among the friends of annexation" because it was "the all absorbing question, stronger even than the presidential, . . . the most important question, both for the South and the Union, ever agitated since the adoption of the Constitution." He had expected to see the Democratic party re-organized as a Texas party--that is, a party in which Van Buren and his faction could find no place; but the acceptance of Polk by Van Buren was not, for Calhoun, an insuperable objection to Polk. Calhoun, like his friends, cheerfully supported Polk--and did so even while Tyler, a Texas candidate who was not acceptable to Van Buren, remained in the race.[45] Calhoun preferred a party with the Van Buren men in it, which could win the election and annex Texas, to one without them which could do neither.

Democrats of all factions shared the preference of Calhoun, as they showed when they nominated Silas Wright to the

Vice Presidency. Butler suggested it to Walker, Roane, and other annexationists, and they adopted the idea with enthusiasm. Walker made the nominating speech; Ralph I. Ingersoll of Connecticut and Romulus M. Saunders of North Carolina, who had been leading advocates of the two-thirds rule, seconded the nomination; and the convention responded with a repetition of the cheering, handkerchief-waving, and unanimity with which they had chosen Polk. Butler's motives in suggesting the nomination, he said, were to make the convention acknowledge that it had wronged Van Buren and New York and to "secure the support of the entire Democracy of the North," especially of New York.[46]

Wright declined the nomination, but not because he was less concerned for party unity than Butler was. Rather, one of his principal reasons for refusing the nomination--which he did as soon as he learned of it--was that it would not unite the party. He was just as opposed to annexation as Van Buren was, he pointed out to those who urged him to accept the nomination, and if he were on the ticket the ostensible reason for the rejection of Van Buren would be exposed as a sham. He was convinced that it was a sham, but, as long as the chief "conspirators" against Van Buren had not personally profited by their betrayal of him, Wright was willing, for the sake of party unity and victory, to help to conceal their crime. He and other New York Van Buren men professed complete satisfaction with the selection of George M. Dallas of Pennsylvania as his replacement on the ticket.[47]

* * *

Wright also agreed with Butler that the Democratic

party should be made to feel that it had wronged New York, but again differed with Butler as to the proper method of accomplishing that object. Instead of allowing Democrats to salve their consciences by making him Vice President, Wright preferred to leave them in debt to New York. The Democrats of that state would be persuaded to vote for Polk "for their principles and their country," returning "good for evil, without the semblance of reward beyond the merit of the cause, and not because a compromise is tendered them." With no New Yorker on the ticket, Wright further argued, it would be easier to carry the state for Polk "by exposing and denouncing the intrigues and the intriguers, and showing that [Polk] had no part, in feeling or action, with them," and that Polk owed his nomination "to the votes of the delegates in the convention who once were true" to Van Buren.[48] Thus would Wright leave the debt unpaid, and enhance it with compounded interest, so that it would require a Presidency to pay it in 1848, instead of a Vice Presidency. Thus also would Wright, even as he acted to unify the party and improve its chances for victory, seek to identify Polk with his own faction and thereby gain a greater share of the victory for them.

It was the 2nd of June when Wright expressed these views. Polk had not yet even learned of his nomination, but a contest had already begun which was a necessary concomitant of the new way in which the Democratic party was organized and of the manner in which Polk had received the nomination. Democrats had agreed to separate their internecine struggle for the control of the party from the selection of its presidential candidate. The

candidate having been selected and the party temporarily preserved by its commitment to him, the bitter contest which had threatened to break up the convention and destroy the party was at once resumed in a new form: as a contest for possession of Polk.

## CHAPTER IX

## AFTERMATH

> "It is easy to see that there is a new dynasty or a new reign commencing . . . New York power is gone, and the governing power is suddenly in new hands . . ."
> John M. Niles of Connecticut, February 24, 1845[1]

The contest for control of James K. Polk, as candidate and then as President, continued for four years and culminated in the temporary disruption of the Democratic party and its defeat in the election of 1848, despite which its organization--in the new form it had taken at the Baltimore convention of 1844--was re-established and persisted through the 1850's.[2] In that contest Martin Van Buren played a part, but not as a national leader of his party. And during the 1850's he merely looked on, from his retirement at Lindenwald, without influence. He was, after his defeat in 1844, just what the Whigs had called him during the election of 1840: a used-up man. He had failed to adapt himself to the new political system.

* * *

Outside New York, Van Buren's influence declined rapidly after the Baltimore convention. George Bancroft of Massachusetts and Cave Johnson of Tennessee entered Polk's Cabinet and wedded their fortunes to his. Those of the old Crawford Radicals

in the South who had not already broken with the Magician soon drifted away from him, especially after his friends in New York endorsed the Wilmot Proviso. Van Buren's supporters in Pennsylvania generally turned to the presidential candidacy of Vice President George M. Dallas as their best hope for the future. Frank Blair, deprived of the congressional printing by the new administration, lived in semi-retirement near Washington, still loyal to Van Buren but without power to aid him. Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri was the Magician's only influential friend in Congress who was not a New Yorker; and Benton, fighting for his political life against opponents in Missouri, had to look after himself first. Many others of Van Buren's old associates soon died or, like Benton, were displaced by younger men.[3]

Within his home state the Magician's power vanished not so quickly, but just as completely. During the campaign of 1844 he still commanded the organization in New York and dictated the nomination of his friend Silas Wright to the governorship. Both Wright and John A. Dix, who entered the United States Senate in 1845, continued to consult Van Buren and to follow his advice.[4] Wright suddenly died in August, 1847, however, and younger men, including Van Buren's brilliant but unstable son John, took over leadership of the faction.

Many of these young Barnburners, as they were called, had begun their careers after Van Buren's entry into national politics. They were not closely acquainted with him and were not, therefore, under his direct influence. John Van Buren was, of course, an exception in having intimate knowledge of his father's ideas and

desires; but he was even less in sympathy with the Magician than the rest. John was the opposite of his father in temperament. During his youth and young manhood he had repeatedly felt indignation at Van Buren's enemies and at his father's apparent calm acquiescence in betrayal and defeat by them. He ached for revenge.[5] And so he would not serve, as he might otherwise have done, as a means by which Van Buren could restrain the Barnburners. Instead John encouraged them to follow a course which led them, himself, and his father out of the Democratic party in 1848.[6]

The end of Van Buren's gradual decline was reached in the election of 1848 when, against his wish, he was nominated to the Presidency as a Free Soiler. He consented to the nomination only for John's sake; having no political future of his own, he played the humiliating role of a hopeless candidate because his son insisted on it. Having given the election in New York, and therefore in the nation, to the Whigs, and having thus convinced the Hunkers that they must re-admit John and the Barnburners to the party on equal terms, the Magician gratefully relapsed into the peace and obscurity of retirement.[7]

* * *

Van Buren lived on until 1862, a relic of the past, while the re-organized Democratic party pursued the new course upon which it had embarked at the national convention of 1844. That new course has been variously described as advocacy of national expansion, as defence of the agricultural interests of the South and West, as subservience to the "Slave Power," and as the preservation of the Union by means of sectional compromises.

But the fundamental change made at Baltimore had been in the organization of the Democratic party rather than in its platform.

The national political party, centered on Congress and led by the President or presidential candidate, in which Van Buren had served his apprenticeship and which he had vainly tried to preserve during the 1820's, had been briefly revived during the 1830's by the sheer force of Andrew Jackson's personality and popular appeal. Once Jackson had retired, the centrifugal forces which had destroyed the Republican party, intensified by the continuance of the political and economic trends which produced them, went to work upon the Democratic party. Unlike its predecessor, however, the Democratic party had not disintegrated; instead, its members had learned how to stay together without being truly integrated. The new Democratic party created at the Baltimore convention incorporated the very forces which had threatened to destroy it. It was a coalition of sectional, state, local, and personal organizations, more truly federal--that is, less consolidated--than the Federal Union. The great sectional compromises it sponsored, beginning with the linking of Texas and Oregon in the Baltimore platform, were neither the purposes of its existence nor the means which enabled it to survive: they were the formulae of unity devised by men who began by agreeing that they must, for their own sakes, keep their party together.

The nature of the new Democratic party was clearly shown on the two occasions when it was not fully able to preserve its unity: in 1848 and 1860. Both times the ostensible cause of its disruption was the sectional dispute over slavery. But both

in 1848 and in 1860 the contending factions accused one another of trying to commit the party to a platform on which its members in one section of the Union could not stand--that is, each faction accused the other of trying to deny it the use of the common political capital. Furthermore, the specific issue on which the party split on each of these occasions was an organizational one: which of two contending delegations, each claiming to represent the Democratic party in its state, was to be seated at a national convention? Whether viewed as an ideological or as an organizational dispute, therefore, each of these two intraparty struggles involved the question, who shall be allowed to be a Democrat? Membership in the national party on terms which would allow them to win their local and state elections was still, in 1860 as in 1844, the thing which Democrats valued most. The presidential nomination, once the main reason for the existence of a national political party, had become a secondary consideration.[8]

* * *

In such a party Martin Van Buren, who for forty years had devoted himself single-mindedly to obtaining the Presidency and keeping it for two terms, could find no comfortable place. The narrow opportunist had become an anachronism.

## Notes to Chapter I

1. Van Buren to Azariah C. Flagg, Washington, D. C., 22 December 1826, Azariah C. Flagg Papers, Columbia University Library, New York, New York.

2. Denis Tilden Lynch, An Epoch and a Man; Martin Van Buren and His Times (New York, 1929), 33-41.

3. Jefferson served in the Virginia House of Burgesses, Van Buren in the New York Senate; both were Governors; Van Buren was also Attorney-General of his state; Jefferson sat in the Continental Congress, Van Buren in the United States Senate; Jefferson was Minister to France, Van Buren to Britain; both were Secretary of State, Vice President, and President.

4. Robert V. Remini, Martin Van Buren and the Making of the Democratic Party (New York, 1959), 1. Van Buren discussed his reputation repeatedly in his Autobiography, ed. by J. C. Fitzpatrick (Vol. 2 of American Historical Association Annual Report, 1918, Washington, 1920); see especially pages 72-73, 169-172, 196-199, 225-226, 399-400, and 447.

5. Remini, Van Buren and the Democratic Party, 3-4.

6. Ibid., 4-5.

Thomas Hart Benton, in his Thirty Years' View . . . 1820-1850 (2 vols., New York, 1856), 1:420, gives one famous instance of Van Buren's ability to control his feelings. After a highly dramatic speech by Henry Clay, in which he appealed to Van Buren personally to intervene with President Andrew Jackson in order to save the country from certain ruin, Van Buren, smiling amiably, approached Clay to ask him for a pinch of snuff, as though he had not heard a word, and then returned to his place as presiding officer of the Senate.

Van Buren's good nature and calm were not entirely assumed for political purposes. He really wanted to be liked, and was liked, by most of the men who were in close contact with him, whether as allies or enemies. This side of his personality is well shown in his Autobiography, which, although undertaken as a defence of his political principles and conduct, tends to degenerate into a sentimental account of warm friendships and of reconciliations, often on the deathbed, with former political enemies.

7. Jabez D. Hammond, The History of Political Parties in the State of New York, from the Ratification of the Federal Constitution to December, 1840 (2 vols., 4th ed., corrected and enlarged, Syracuse, N. Y., 1852), 1:470-471 and 477-482.

8. William Allen Butler, A Retrospect of Forty Years, 1825-1865, ed. by Harriet Allen Butler (New York, 1911), 88-89.

9. Van Buren's literary style is displayed in his Autobiography, in which he describes, pages 10-11 and 21, his lack of education and other advantages. Hammond, in his History of Political Parties in New York, 1:354-355, 372-373, and 524-525, speaks very highly of Van Buren's literary abilities, but James K. Paulding, the author, was not so complimentary; see Paulding to Van Buren, New York, 16 April 1844, Martin Van Buren Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

Van Buren's personality, both public and private, is well described in Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., The Age of Jackson (New York, 1945), 48-52.

On his financial success, see his Autobiography, 21, and his "Estimates", 1842 and n. d., [probably 1843], both filed at the end of 1842, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

10. Remini, Van Buren and the Democratic Party, 2; Lynch, Epoch and Man, 28-29.

11. Ibid., 33-34, 46, and 48; Van Buren, Autobiography, 11, 13, and 14-15; Remini, Van Buren and the Democratic Party, 2-3.

12. Van Buren, Autobiography, 13-14.

13. Ibid., 15-16.

14. Schlesinger, Age of Jackson, 48.

15. Ibid., 50-51; Carl Russell Fish, The Civil Service and the Patronage (Cambridge, Mass., [c1904]), 86-91.

16. Jabez D. Hammond to H. S. Randall, Cherry Valley, N. Y., 20 November 1851, New York Historical Society, New York, New York.

17. Van Buren, in his Autobiography, pages 11-12, explained that because of his poor education and mental laziness, he was rarely well informed on any political issue when it was first raised, and admitted that he often had to be very adroit to avoid the embarrassment of being forced to speak on a subject of which he was ignorant. He repels, with one exception (pages 169-172), the charge against him of non-commitalism, but his public statements on controversial issues, like those of most of his contemporaries, were often equivocal. See pages 31-32, above, for one good example.

18. Martin Van Buren, Inquiry into the Origin and Course of Political Parties in the United States (New York, 1867), passim.

Remini asserts, in Van Buren and the Democratic Party, 2, 24, 36, and passim, that Van Buren was devoted to principle, but his evidence does not convince. Two of the most prominent instances of Van Buren's alleged devotion to principle during the latter part of his career, his advocacy of the Independent Treasury and his supposed opposition to the annexation of Texas, are treated at length in Chapters II and VII below.

19. Hammond, History of Political Parties in New York, 1:160ff.

20. Ibid., 262-263 and 311; Van Buren, Autobiography, 28-32; Lynch, Epoch and Man, 59-66, 69-70, and 73-90.

21. Hammond, History of Political Parties in New York, 1:320-322; Van Buren, Autobiography, 37 and 39-41.

22. Ibid., 45-49; Hammond, History of Political Parties in New York, 1:354-356.

23. Ibid., 1:392-393.

24. Ibid., 355-356, 457-460, 470-471, and 477-482.

25. Ibid., 1:31-32, 155-158, 165-173, 178-179, 323-339, 425-426, 497, and 563, and 2:429, 436, 455, and 525; Remini, Van Buren and the Democratic Party, 10-11.

26. Of the older Republican leaders, Smith Thompson had been appointed Secretary of the Navy in 1819 and David D. Tompkins had been the party's gubernatorial candidate in 1820. Of men Van Buren's own age, Samuel Young had already been made a Canal Commissioner and Henry Seymour was elected to the Board in 1819; Roger Skinner was appointed a United States District Attorney in 1819 and early in 1820 was elected to the Council of Appointment; Benjamin Knower was elected State Treasurer and John Savage, Comptroller, at about the same time.

Under Skinner's leadership the Council of Appointment made wholesale removals in order to open places for deserving Bucktails, as Van Buren's faction were then called, and in 1820 the Bucktails endorsed the movement for a constitutional convention to reform the judiciary, the eventual result of which was the appointment of many prominent Bucktails to the state bench. Hammond, History of Political Parties in New York, 1:496-498, 527, 539, 561-562, and 566-569 and 2:109-119.

On the rise of the young Regents see: Robert V. Remini, "The Albany Regency," New York History, 39(1958):341-355.

27. Remini, "Albany Regency," N. Y. Hist., 39:341-355; Ivor Debenham Spencer, The Victor and the Spoils; A Life of William L. Marcy (Providence, R. I., 1959), 45-46.

28. Robert M. T. Hunter to John C. Calhoun, Loyds, Essex Co., Va., 16 June /1843/, in: J. Franklin Jameson, ed., Correspondence of John C. Calhoun (Vol. 2 of American Historical Association, Annual Report, 1899, Washington, 1900), 866.

29. Shaw Livermore, The Twilight of Federalism: The Disintegration of the Federalist Party, 1815-1830 (Princeton, N. J., 1962), 38-41, 44-54, and 105-112, points out that although Monroe professed a desire to allay partisan feeling, he actually appointed very few Federalists to office and none to important offices.

30. Ibid., 14-15, 18-19, and 102-104; Schlesinger, Age of Jackson, 11-12 and 19; Van Buren, Autobiography, 115-117, 123-124, and 302-309.

31. Frederick W. Dallinger, Nominations for Elective Office in the United States (New York, 1897), 13-21; Noble E. Cunningham, The Jeffersonian Republicans; The Formation of Party Organization, 1789-1801 (Chapel Hill, N. C., /c1957/), 82, 90-92, and 162; Edward Stanwood, A History of the Presidency (2 vols., Boston and New York, /c1924/), 1:82-83, 90-91, 99-100, 108-110, 117, 124-131, and 168; editorial and article by "A Western Correspondent," in Niles Register, 24:241-242, 21 June 1822; Resolutions of the Alabama legislature, ibid., 25:308, 17 January 1824; John H. Brevard to Willie P. Mangum, 10 March 1824, in: Henry Thomas Shanks, ed., The Papers of Willie Persons Mangum (5 vols., Raleigh, N. C., 1950-1956), 1:123-124.

32. Remini, Van Buren and the Democratic Party, 18-26 and 36-39.

33. Ibid., 43-45 and 47-49.

34. Ibid., 39-42 and 45-47 and 64.

35. Ibid., 72-82; Van Buren, Autobiography, 145.

36. Ibid., 149-152; Remini, Van Buren and the Democratic Party, 86-90.

37. Ibid., 103-104.

38. Ibid., 167; Van Buren, Autobiography, 157-168.

39. Remini, Van Buren and the Democratic Party, 102-103, 105-111, 114-115, 129-133, 143-144, and 162-163; Charles H. Ambler, Thomas Ritchie; A Study in Virginia Politics (Richmond, Va., 1913), 18-19, 93, and 107-108; Van Buren, Autobiography, 514-516. Van Buren erroneously states that the national convention was held.

40. John S. Barbour to Calhoun, Catalpa, Va., 17 April 1827, in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 793; Andrew Jackson to Richard M. Johnson, The Hermitage, near Nashville, Tenn., September 1828, in: John Spencer Bassett, ed., Correspondence of Andrew Jackson (7 vols., Washington, 1926-1935), 3:431; R. Carlyle Buley, The Old Northwest; Pioneer Period, 1815-1840 (2 vols., Indianapolis, 1950), 2:160-161; Charles S. Sydnor, The Development of Southern Sectionalism, 1819-1848 (Vol. 5, 1948, of A History of the South, ed. by Wendell Holmes Stephenson and E. Merton Coulter, Baton Rouge, La., 1947- ), 192-193.

41. Remini, Van Buren and the Democratic Party, 132-146.

42. Ibid., 160-161.

43. Van Buren, Autobiography, 149.

44. Remini, Van Buren and the Democratic Party, 190-195.

45. Schlesinger, Age of Jackson, 214; Buley, Old Northwest, 2:211, 213, and 219.

46. Van Buren to James A. Hamilton, Albany, 17 December 1828, Martin Van Buren Letters, Presidential Papers Collection, New York Public Library, New York, New York; John Spencer Bassett, The Life of Andrew Jackson (new ed., 2 vols. paginated as 1, New York, 1928), 410; Van Buren, Autobiography, 224 and 231.

47. Michael Hoffman to A. C. Flagg, Washington, 7 March 1829, Azariah C. Flagg Papers, New York Public Library, New York, New York; Lynch, Epoch and Man, 323; Bassett, Life of Jackson, 410, 413, and 515;

Van Buren did solicit the appointment of Hamilton as Acting Secretary of the State Department. Ibid., 410-411.

48. Extracts of Jesse Hoyt to Van Buren, 21 March 1829, and Van Buren to Hoyt, 13 April 1829, in: William L. Mackenzie, The Lives and Opinions of Benj'n Franklin Butler . . . and Jesse Hoyt . . . (Boston, 1845), 51-53 and 53-54; Bassett, Live of Jackson, 452-453; Van Buren to Jackson, 24 April 1829, in: Bassett, ed., Corr. of Jackson, 4:27 and note; Van Buren, Autobiography, 262-268.

New York Democrats were still bitter about this affair in 1836. Silas Wright to A. C. Flagg, Washington, February 3, 1836, Flagg Papers, N. Y. Pub. Lib.

49. Bassett, Life of Jackson, 431-435; Schlesinger, Age of Jackson, 6-7, 39, 45,

50. Compare the United States Official Register for 1837 and 1839.

See also the following letters to Van Buren in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.: C. J. Ingersoll, Philadelphia, 14 October 1836; James Buchanan, Lancaster, Pa., 18 November 1836; Caleb Pierce, Chester, Pa., 22 November 1836; George Guier, Philadelphia, 3 March 1837; John M. Read, Philadelphia, 5 April 1837; J. A. Barker, Philadelphia, 5, 9, 17, and 19 April 1837; Henry D. Gilpin, Philadelphia, 7 April 1837; George F. Lehman, Philadelphia, 11 April and 9 May 1837; and Benjamin Mifflin, Philadelphia, 18 April 1837,

Also: Resolutions of the Convention [sic] of Democratic Representatives of the Legislature of Massachusetts, Boston, 23-24 March 1837; John B. Turner, chairman, et al., n. p., 31 March 1837; David Henshaw, Boston, 16 May 1837; and William Foster, n. p., 17 May 1837; all ibid.

And: William Ernest Smith, The Francis Preston Blair Family in Politics (2 vols., New York, 1933), 1:136

51. Bassett, Life of Jackson, 483-495; Van Buren, Autobiography, 320-338, including Van Buren to Jackson, W[ashington], 4 May 1830, (pages 321-322) and Van Buren's correspondence with Madison (pages 330-335).

52. Ibid., 545-552, including a report on the subject written by Van Buren for the New York legislature (pages 550-552); Van Buren to Jackson, Albany, 27 December 1832, in: Bassett, ed., Corr. of Jackson, 4:506-508; Bassett, Life of Jackson, 567-583.

On Van Buren's connection with the Tariff Act of 1828, which provoked, along with the amendments to it adopted in 1832, the tariff and nullification crisis of 1832-1833, see: Remini, Van Buren and the Democratic Party, 170-185; John Arthur Garraty, Silas Wright (New York, 1949), 50-69; and Spencer, Victor and Spoils, 76-77.

53. Thomas Payne Govan, Nicholas Biddle: Nationalist and Public Banker, 1786-1844 (Chicago, 1959), 114, 124, 137, 144-147; Glyndon G. Van Deusen, The Jacksonian Era (New York, c1959), 86; Bassett, Life of Jackson, 585-622.

Schlesinger, in his Age of Jackson, repeatedly asserts and implies that Van Buren favored the attack on the Bank. See especially page 77, where he says that Van Buren "more or less" agreed with Benton's ideas on the currency, which statement is, significantly, undocumented. Louis McLane, who was briefly Jackson's Secretary of the Treasury, assumed that Van Buren opposed the

(continued)

53, continued:
Bank, but his references to the subject suggest that he simply took this for granted because Van Buren had been a Crawford Radical, and he did not claim any definite knowledge of Van Buren's views. Characteristically, Van Buren reprinted McLane's comments in his Autobiography, but neither confirmed nor denied them. See: McLane to Van Buren, Washington, 6 and 12 December 1831, in: Van Buren, Autobiography, 600-601. Bray Hammond, in his Banks and Politics in America from the Revolution to the Civil War (Princeton, N. J., 1957), 354-358, adopts and elaborates upon the theory of Fritz Redlich that Van Buren plotted the attack on the Bank, but his account is based on circumstantial evidence, on accusations by enemies of Van Buren who knew nothing of his purposes and little of his actions, and on a very tortured construction of a remark in Van Buren's Autobiography. Govan, whose investigation of this subject was more thorough and who certainly cannot be accused of a pro-Van Buren bias, concludes that Van Buren was neutral until Jackson had committed himself completely.

54. Jackson to Van Buren, Rip Raps, Va., 12 August 1833; Van Buren to Jackson, Saratoga Springs, N. Y., 19 August 1833; Jackson to Van Buren, Rip Raps, Va., 20 August 1833; Van Buren to Jackson, On Board Canal Boat Between Oswego and Utica, N. Y., 30 August 1833; Van Buren to Jackson, Albany, N. Y., 4 September 1833; Jackson to Van Buren, Washington, 8 September 1833; Van Buren to Jackson, Kinderhook, N. Y., 11 September 1833; Van Buren to Jackson, Staatborough, N. Y., 14 September 1833; and Jackson to Van Buren, Washington, 15 September 1833; all in: Bassett, ed., Corr. of Jackson, 5:153-154, 159-160, 167-168, 173, 179-182, 182-183, 183-184, 185-186, and 187.

And: Silas Wright to A. C. Flagg, Canton, N. Y., 8 August 1833, Flagg Papers, N. Y. Pub. Lib.; Wright to James K. Polk, Albany, 21 January 1845, in: Ransom H. Gillet, The Life and Times of Silas Wright (2 vols. paginated as 1, Albany, 1874), 2:1644, and in the Polk Papers, Library of Congress; Bassett, Life of Jackson, 631-635; Schlesinger, Age of Jackson, 79-102.

Schlesinger (op. cit., page 100) accepts the tale of Amos Kendall that he convinced Van Buren of the necessity for the removal of the deposits during a conversation with the Magician--in the spring of 1833, according to Schlesinger, although Kendall himself did not date the event nor even say whether it was before or after the decision had been made by Jackson. Kendall, The Autobiography of Amos Kendall, ed. by William Stickney (New York, 1949, [c1872]), 376. This story is unsubstantiated by any other evidence.

In his letter to Jackson of 14 September 1833, cited above, Van Buren explained that he had not yet come to Washington, where Jackson wanted him, because it was "the game of the opposition . . . to remove the question [of the deposits] as far as they can,

(continued)

54 continued:
from the influence of your well deserved popularity with the people, by attributing the removal of the Deposits to the solicitations of myself . . ."

55. Bassett, Life of Jackson, 693-697; Schlesinger, Age of Jackson, 126-131; and pages 31-32 and 36-37 below.

Van Buren also followed Jackson's lead on the subject of Indian policy, despite bitter criticism in New York of which he was unpleasantly aware. See Van Buren, Autobiography, 276-296, and Van Buren to F. P. Blair, 12 September 1842, quoted in: Smith, Blair Family, 1:157.

56. Willie P. Mangum to David L. Swain, Washington, 22 December 1833, in: Shanks, ed., Mangum Papers, 2:51-56; Charles Grier Sellers, Jr., James K. Polk, Jacksonian: 1795-1843 (Princeton, N. J., 1957), 148-152, 155, 181-182, 235-242, 245, 250-266, and 292-297.

This process is well illustrated by the politics of Pennsylvania during Jackson's second term. The Democratic party there was divided between the so-called Amalgamation Men, headed by Henry A. Muhlenberg, and the followers of Governor George Wolf and Senator Samuel McKean. Having failed to prevent the selection of McKean as the party's senatorial candidate and having in the process incurred the onus of irregularity, the Amalgamation Men in 1833 threw themselves wholeheartedly into the campaign to make Van Buren Jackson's successor. Despite the fact that Van Buren was not popular in Pennsylvania and had not received the state's electoral votes in 1832 when he was elected Vice President (although Jackson had gotten Pennsylvania's support in 1832), the Wolf-McKean faction felt compelled to join in the defence, against criticism by the opposition, of the proposed national convention of 1835, which the Whigs were charging was simply a device for fastening Van Buren on an unwilling party. After he had been elected to the Senate McKean reversed himself, attacking both the convention and Van Buren's nomination, with the consequence that his political strength rapidly decreased. In 1835 the party was split wide open by the gubernatorial race, both Wolf and Muhlenberg running, but in 1836 the two factions united in support of a single electoral ticket pledged to Van Buren. See: Charles McCool Snyder, The Jacksonian Heritage: Pennsylvania Politics, 1833-1848 (Harrisburg, Pa., 1958), 32-34, 50-63, and 82-83.

Since Van Buren was not personally popular in the state, the support of him, first by the Muhlenberg faction, then by the Wolf men, and finally both, was due to: 1) Jackson's influence and 2) the desire of each faction to save the party from permanent disruption in their state--a motive which was not very strong at the time of the split in 1835 but was no doubt increased in effect by the Whig victory of that year in the gubernatorial election.

(continued)

56 continued:

Snyder argues (op. cit., pages 83-85) that opposition to the chartering of the Bank of the United States as a state bank by the Pennsylvania legislature was another factor leading to the re-union of the Democrats of the state in support of Van Buren. But he gives evidence that Pennsylvania Democrats were far from being in agreement about the Bank and that their ostensible agreement in opposition to it was a sham (pages 37-44, 77-79, and 85). That they pretended an agreement they did not feel is another illustration of Jackson's influence and of the force of the pressures described in the text. Unless they were willing to oppose Jackson, Democrats had at least to pay lip service to his principles, just as they had to give at least a grudging support to Van Buren, his chosen successor.

57. Democrats of all varieties clearly understood, during Jackson's Presidency and even before his first inauguration, that only his popularity, and the political power it gave him, held the party together. See:

Felix Grundy to Jackson, Nashville, 20 November 1828, and John H. Houston of Pennsylvania to A. J. Donelson, both in: Bassett, ed., Corr. of Jackson, 3:445-446 and 4:13, n2.

Duff Green to Ninian Edwards, Washington, 6 January 1829, in: Elihu B. Washburne, ed., The Edwards Papers (Vol. 3 of Chicago Historical Society Collections, Chicago, 1914), 380.

Martin Van Buren to Enos Throop, /Washington/, 10 January 1830, Martin Van Buren Papers, New York State Library, Albany.

William T. Barry to Mrs. Susan Taylor, Washington, 25 February 1830, in: "Letters of William T. Barry, 1796-1801, 1829-1831," American Historical Review, 16(1910-1911):334-335.

For other testimony to the power of Jackson's popularity, see:

George B. Porter to Samuel D. Ingham, Lancaster, Pa., 21 February 1824, (copy), George B. Porter Collection, Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois.

Nathaniel McLean to John McLean, Columbus, Ohio, 26 October 1827, John McLean Papers, Library of Congress, quoted in: Francis P. Weisburger, The Passing of the Frontier, 1825-1860 (Vol. 3, 1941, of: Carl Wittke, ed., The State of Ohio, 6 vols., Columbus, Ohio, 1941-1944,), 227.

John C. Calhoun to James H. Hammond, Washington, 15 January 1831, in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 281.

Willie P. Mangum to William Gaston, Washington, 19 January 1832, in: Shanks, ed., Mangum Papers, 1:454-456.

George E. Boswell to Nathaniel Beverley Tucker, Petersburg, Va., 31 January 1833, and Thomas Hart Benton to Tucker, Washington, 11 February 1833, both in: "Correspondence of Judge Tucker," William and Mary Quarterly, 1st ser., 12(1903-1904):85 and 86-87.

William R. King to James Buchanan, Paris, France, 30 April 1845, and John Catron to Buchanan, Nashville, 11 June 1845, both in: Miscellaneous Correspondence, Buchanan Papers, Hist. Soc. of Pa.

58. Leland W. Meyer, Life and Times of Col. Richard M. Johnson of Kentucky (New York, 1932), passim; Schlesinger, Age of Jackson, 135-136, 139-142, 212-213, and 296-297; John Tipton to Calvin Fletcher and "A Voter" [Tipton] to the editor of the Indiana Journal, 5 January 1834, in: Glen A. Blackburn, comp., and Nellie Armstrong Robertson and Dorothy Riker, eds., The John Tipton Papers (3 vols., Indianapolis, 1942, also published as Vols. 24-26 of the Indiana Historical Collections), 3:5-9.

59. Ambler, Ritchie, 169-173, 180, and 184-185; Meyer, Life and Times of Johnson, 413, 417-419, and 427-429; Schlesinger, Age of Jackson, 213.

60. Bassett, Life of Jackson, 693-697; "An Act to regulate the deposites of the public money," 23 June 1836, in: Charles F. Dunbar, comp., Laws of the United States Relating to Currency, Finance, and Banking, from 1789 to 1891 (Boston, 1891), 110-116.

The Deposit Act established regulations, which Jackson and Van Buren considered inadequate, for the depository banks and further provided for the "deposit," really the distribution, of the federal surplus among the states. On its legislative history, see: John C. Calhoun to James H. Hammond, Washington, 19 June 1836, in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 358, and Silas Wright to A. C. Flagg, Washington, 9 January 1837, Flagg Papers, N. Y. Pub. Lib.

61. Ambler, Ritchie, 170; Meyer, Life and Times of Johnson,

62. Silas Wright to A. C. Flagg, Washington, 9 January 1837, Flagg Papers, N. Y. Pub. Lib.; William C. Rives to Van Buren, Oak Ridge, Va., 20 September 1836, and Castle Hill, Va., 13 October 1836, Van Buren Papers, L. C.; Lewis F. Linn to Wright, Ste. Genevieve, Mo., 8 April 1837, ibid.; and Wright to Van Buren, Canton, N. Y., 4 June 1837, ibid. The quotation is from Rives's letter of 20 September 1836.

63. Buley, Old Northwest, 2:213-214; Resolutions of the Senate of Illinois, December, 1835, quoted in: Homer J. Webster, "History of the Democratic Party Organization in the Northwest, 1824-1840," Ohio Archaeological and Historical Quarterly, 24(1915):68.

Notes to Chapter II

1. Wright to Van Buren, Canton, N. Y., 4 June 1837, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

2. Bassett, Life of Jackson, 697-699.

3. Bray Hammond, Banks and Politics, 451-459; Govan, Biddle, 299-311.

4. Schlesinger, Age of Jackson, 130-131. Examples of the demand for repeal of the Circular are the following letters to Van Buren in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.: W. R. Hallett, Mobile, Ala., 12 January 1837; Henry Toland, Philadelphia, 9 March 1837; G. A. Worth, New York City, 12 March 1837; Campbell P. White, New York City, 14 March 1837; Nathaniel P. Tallmadge, New York City, 15 March 1837; C. W. Lawrence, New York City, 18 March 1837; Robert J. Ward, Louisville, Ky., 22 March 1837; J. Boon, Boonville, Ind., 4 April 1837; William C. Rives, Castle Hill, Va., 7 April 1837; William F. H. Claiborne, Madison Co., Miss., 10 April 1837; R. Patterson, Philadelphia, 29 April 1837; and Isaac Hone et al., Committee of New York Merchants, New York City, 31 May 1837.

5. Van Buren to Jackson, fragment of undated draft, about 20 March 1837; and Van Buren to Jackson, Washington, 24 April 1837; reveal Van Buren's alarm. Jackson urged retention of the Specie Circular in letters from Smithland, Ky., 22 March 1837, and the Hermitage, his home near Nashville, Tenn., 30 March and 24 April 1837.

Van Buren prepared several sets of questions on the subject, for submission to his Cabinet, but never submitted them because he believed they would disagree and because he had decided to take responsibility for the decision himself; see one such set of questions, dated 24 March 1837. By 8 April 1837 Van Buren had decided to retain the Circular; in justifying that decision (in a letter to Wm. C. Rives, Washington, 8 April 1837) he used the arguments presented by Jackson in his letters of 22 and 30 March.

But Van Buren wavered late in April, as is shown by his letter to Jackson of 24 April 1837, and was awaiting new advice from Jackson when the New York City banks suspended specie payments.

Other advisers echoed Jackson's views; see the following letters to Van Buren: Silas Wright, New York City, 21 March 1837; Roger B. Taney, Baltimore, 1 April 1837; Henry D. Gilpin, Philadelphia, 7 April 1837; and C. C. Cambreleng, New York City, 20 April 1837; and a report, "Probable Consequences of the Repeal of the Treasury Circular," probably by William M. Gouge, 19 March 1837.

All of the above-mentioned letters are ibid.

6. Van Buren learned about the suspension of the New York City banks in the newspapers and in letters from C. C. Cambreleng, New York City, 6 and 10 May 1837; Henry D. Gilpin of Philadelphia wrote him, 10 and 11 May 1837, about the suspension by the banks of his city; all ibid.

7. Van Buren, Proclamation, 15 May 1837, in: James D. Richardson, comp., A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1897 (/1st ed./, 10 vols., Washington, 1896-1899), 3:321-322.

John Brockenbrough to Van Buren, Richmond, 22 May 1837; and Brockenbrough to Wm. C. Rives, Richmond, 22 May 1837, a copy, enclosed in the above; both in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.

Van Buren received similar advice from others; see these letters to him, ibid.: Samuel Medary, Columbus, O., 18 May 1837; H. D. Gilpin, Philadelphia, 21 and 22 May 1837; Dutee J. Pearce, Newport, R. I., 29 May 1837; Andrew Jackson, the Hermitage, 6 June 1837; Gideon Welles, Hartford, Conn., 24 July 1837. Richard B. Parker of Richmond, Va., (to B. F. Butler, 29 May 1837); C. C. Cambreleng of New York City (to Major Abraham Van Buren, 30 May 1837); and Issac Hill of Concord, N. H. (to Secretary of the Treasury Levi Woodbury, 4 July 1837); were in general agreement with Brockenbrough. All ibid.

William M. Gouge had proposed the Independent Treasury in A Short History of Paper Money and Banking in the United States . . . (Philadelphia, 1833), Pt. 1, 111-113; Pt. 2, 218. So had Congressman William F. Gordon of Virginia, a friend of John C. Calhoun, who had introduced bills embodying not only Divorce but also the Specie Clause in the congressional sessions of 1833-1834 and 1834-1835; Armistead C. Gordon, William Fitzhugh Gordon, a Virginian of the Old School; His Life, Times and Contemporaries (1787-1858) (New York and Washington, 1909), 229-237.

But it was Dr. Brockenbrough to whom Van Buren referred as the author of the scheme when he asked his friends and advisers what they thought of it; James Buchanan to Van Buren, Lancaster, Pa., 6 June 1837; and Silas Wright to Van Buren, Canton, N. Y., 4 June 1837; both in the Van Buren Papers, L. C. There are two possible explanations of Van Buren's attributing the idea to Brockenbrough: that the Doctor was a politician and a banker, and his opinion therefore counted more with such a practical man as the Magician than that of Gouge, who was a theorist; or that Van Buren simply was ignorant of Gouge's book and thought and believed Brockenbrough's suggestion to be completely original--Van Buren said in his Autobiography, pages 11-12, that because of poor education and mental laziness he often knew nothing of a political issue when he first confronted it, and had to avoid committing himself until he had studied up on it. Another possibility is that Van Buren distinguished between Gouge's proposal of the Independent Treasury as an abstract proposition and Brockenbrough's proposal

(continued)

7, continued:

that Van Buren adopt the scheme as a practical response to the political and financial crisis in which he found himself.

8. Van Buren to Rives, 25 May 1837, draft copy; and James Buchanan to Van Buren, Lancaster, Pa., 6 June 1837, referring to a letter from Van Buren dated 30 May 1837; both in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.

9. Thomas Hart Benton to Van Buren, St. Louis, 31 May 1837, opposing either "compromise or capitulation;" Silas Wright to Van Buren, Canton, N. Y., 4 June 1837, expressing fear that the Independent Treasury could not win a majority in Congress, and 22 June 1837, endorsing Van Buren's decision to advocate it; James Buchanan to Van Buren, Lancaster, Pa., 6 June 1837, supporting the Independent Treasury but not the Specie Clause, and recommending the prohibition of banknotes of small denominations; John M.Niles to Van Buren, Hartford, Conn., 1 July 1837; A. C. Flagg to ------, Albany, 12 July 1837; Roger B. Taney to Van Buren, Baltimore, 20 July 1837, favoring the use of special deposits in state banks over the Independent Treasury but approving the Specie Clause; B. F. Butler to Van Buren, New York City, 4 August 1837, recommending a federal bankruptcy law for banks which suspended specie payments and a federal tax on banknotes of small denominations; and Jabez D. Hammond to Van Buren, Cherry Valley, N. Y., 4 August 1837; all ibid.

10. Tallmadge to Van Buren, New York City, 15 March 1837; and Wm. C. Rives to Van Buren, Castle Hill, Va., 7 April and 3 June 1837; all ibid.

On Tallmadge's opposition to Van Buren, see: Levi Beardsley to Tallmadge, Cherry Valley, N. Y., 15 and 30 June 1837; and Thurlow Weed to Tallmadge, Albany, 17 December 1837; all in the Nathaniel P. Tallmadge Papers, microfilm, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin. (Originals are in possession of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Boardman, Oshkosh, Wisconsin.)

See also: A. C. Flagg to ------, Albany, 12 July 1837, Van Buren Papers, L. C.; Wright to Flagg, Washington, 3 September 1837, Flagg Papers, N. Y. Pub. Lib.; Garraty, Wright, 150-153 and 159.

On Ritchie's views, see: Thomas Ritchie to William C. Rives, Richmond, 10 August and 20 and 21 September [1837]; and Ritchie to Thomas Green, [Richmond], 20 September 1837; all in: "Ritchie Letters," The John P. Branch Historical Papers of Randolph-Macon College, 3(1909-1912): 223-225, and 4(1913-1916): 383.

11. Van Buren, Message to Congress, 4 September 1837, in: Richardson, comp., Messages and Papers of Presidents, 3:328-342.

(continued)

11, continued:

In Wright's letter to Van Buren, 22 June 1837, cited in note 9 above, he acknowledged receipt of a letter from Van Buren, dated 12 June 1837, containing drafts of proposed bills and announcing Van Buren's intention to recommend the Independent Treasury and the Specie Clause to Congress.

12. Smith, Blair Family, 1:128-129 and 131-132; Congressional Globe, 25th Cong., 1st, 2nd, and 3rd sess., passim.

13. Jackson to Van Buren, Smithland, Ky., 22 March 1837, and from the Hermitage, 30 March and 12 May 1837; all in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.

14. Van Buren, Message to Congress, 4 September 1837, in: Richardson, comp., Messages and Papers of Presidents, 3:325-327 and 333-334; Silas Wright and John L. Russell, articles written for the St. Lawrence Republican, at Ogdensburgh, N. Y., during the summer of 1837, which articles are quoted at length in: Garraty, Wright, 147-150, and in: Jabez D. Hammond, Political History of the State of New York, from Jan. 1, 1841, to Jan. 1, 1847: Volume 3: Including the Life of Silas Wright (/corrected ed./; Syracuse, 1852; this continuation of Hammond's History of Political Parties in New York will hereafter be cited as Vol. 3 of that work), 149-156; Jackson to James Buchanan, the Hermitage, 24 August and 26 December 1837, in: George Ticknor Curtis, Life of James Buchanan, Fifteenth President of the United States (2 vols., New York, 1883), 1:420-422; Message of Governor John Fairfield to the . . . Legislature of the State of Maine, January, 1840 (Augusta, Me., 1840), 9-10; Minority Report of the Committee on Banks, Illinois House of Representatives, 22 February 1841, in: Illinois Legislative Reports, 1840-1841 (Springfield, 1841), 358; /Van Buren/, memorandum entitled "Fiscal," filed 7 December 1842, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

15. William Leggett, articles from the New York Evening Post, March, 6 August, 26 August, and December, 1834, in: Theodore Sedgwick, Jr., ed., A Collection of the Political Writings of William Leggett (2 vols., New York, 1840), 1:19-27, 41-43, 56-57, and 96-106; Robert Rantoul, Jr., articles from the Gloucester, Mass., Democrat, December, 1834, and June and July, 1837, in: Luther Hamilton, Memoirs, Speeches, and Writings of Robert Rantoul, Jr. (Boston, 1854), 517-529, 530, and 531; Hammond, History of Political Parties in New York, 2:464-465; Report of the Select Committee . . . on . . . a general system of private banking, 18 March 1837, Senate Document #55, pages 2-7, 12, 13, and 17-19, in: New York Senate Documents, 1837 (3 vols., Albany, 1837), Vol. 2; Report of the Committee to inquire . . . what . . . measures should be taken . . . to reduce the amount of paper money in circulation, 14 April 1837, Assembly Document #302, page 28, in: New York Assembly Documents, 1837 (4 vols., Albany, 1837), Vol. 4;

(continued)

15, continued:

Thomas H. Fletcher to Van Buren, Nashville, Tenn., 28 March 1837, Van Buren Papers, L. C.; David Duncan Wallace, The History of South Carolina (4 vols., New York, 1934), 2:481-486; William D. Williamson, Bank Commissioner of the State of Maine, Report, 1840, House Document #7, 20th Maine Legislature (Augusta, Me., 1840), 8-10; Report of the Committee on Federal Relations, 18 December 1840, in: General Assembly of South Carolina, Reports and Resolutions, Regular Session, 1840 (Columbia, S. C., 1841), 81-85; Rufus H. King to Albert H. Tracy, Albany, N. Y., 29 March 1841, Albert H. Tracy Papers, New York State Library, Albany; Governor A. P. Bagby of Alabama, Message to the Legislature, November, 1841, in: Niles Register, 61:204, 27 November 1841; Lillian Adele Kibler, Benjamin F. Perry: South Carolina Unionist (Durham, N. C., 1946), 234-235.

16. Leggett, article from Evening Post, 20 November 1834, in: Sedgwick, ed., Writings of Leggett, 1:71-77; Hamilton, Memoirs and Writings of Rantoul, 46-48; Parke Godwin, A Biography of William Cullen Bryant with Extracts from His Private Correspondence (2 vols., New York, 1883), 1:209; Governor James H. Hammond of South Carolina, Message to the Legislature, December 1844, South Carolina Senate Journal, Regular Session, 1844 (Columbia, S. C., 1844), 14; Kibler, Perry, 231; John L. O'Sullivan to Henry D. Gilpin, New York, 24 May 1840, in: Political and Social Correspondence, Henry D. Gilpin Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

The attacks of these reformers on banks were related to their other activities. Prior to the adoption of "free banking laws" incorporated banks were established by special acts of legislation and protected by "restraining laws" which gave them monopolies of note-issue and sometimes of other banking functions as well. Consequently, bank charters and bank stock were a part of the political patronage and banks tended to be political institutions. Any effect upon the economy produced by the banks could therefore be described as interference in the economy by politicians or by government.

Codification of the Common Law, be reducing the discretion of judges in interpreting the Common Law, would likewise reduce political influence on business. It is interesting to note that Henry Sedgwick of New York was an advocate of this reform (see: Godwin, Bryant, 1:209) because he was the son of Judge Theodore Sedgwick, arch-Federalist of Stockbridge, Massachusetts. His father had been appointed to office for life, as had most judges of the Federalist period, when judicial independence of popular control was considered essential to the protection of property rights. By the 1820's, judicial offices in New York had become a part of the spoils system, and within a few decades many judges were elected to office for short terms. Had the younger Sedgwick

(continued)

16, continued:

turned away from the faith of his father? Or was he simply seeking a new way to secure the same goal: protection of property rights. If the judge cannot be independent of the majority, then the law must be made independent--that is, so specific as to allow only one interpretation--of the judge.

Abolition of the laws for the compulsory collection of debts was another somewhat ambiguous proposal. One of its advocates, O'Sullivan, whose letter to Gilpin is cited above, expressed great sympathy for the "honest and industrious mechanics" who could not pay their debts because deflation had doubled the value of money and who were ruined by lawsuits brought by their creditors. But O'Sullivan went on to complain of the losses that were suffered because of "the skillful management of /the/ chicanery" of some who took advantage of such laws, and because of "the incautious credit" which the existence of such laws encouraged. That O'Sullivan was not contemptuous of property rights was shown by his final argument for reform: "Would not the law of self-preservation soon generate such an atmosphere of social opinion that men would no more fail to pay their debts or perform their contracts, than they would perform any of the various outrages against the social order and well being which now subject them to ignominy and punishment?" O'Sullivan advocated the exclusion of legal processes from the relationship between debtor and creditor in order to subject that relationship to the far more effective, and more moral, regulation of the market and the conscience, where political favoritism or skill in finding loopholes in the law were of no avail.

17. The reference to "persevering industry" is from a Fourth of July address by Col. B. F. Hunt at Charleston, S. C., printed in the Charleston Courier, 9 July 1840. It was William D. Williamson, the Maine Bank Commissioner, whose report for 1840 is cited in note 15, above, who denounced speculators who were "resolved to make their fortunes, and live in fashion, without industry or economy;" he also criticized the "men, sometimes, of small wealth and smaller principle . . . men of loud pretensions and slender abilities" who have "made war upon the community, that they might riot upon the spoils." He added that such men had "obtained bills from the banks for the purpose of wild and wicked speculations" and that they "lived in sumptuous idleness, on means beyond the reach of legal process, reckless of honor and engagement . . ." Williamson, op. cit., 58

The other quoted phrases are from the Report of the Select Committee to inquire . . . what . . . measures should be taken . . . to reduce the amount of paper money in circulation, 14 April 1837, Sen. Doc. #55, pages 13 and 18, in: New York Senate Documents, 1837, Vol. 2.

(continued)

17, continued:

For other, similar expressions of contempt for and anger at men who obtained wealth, not by industry, sobriety, and frugality, but by gambling financed by politically chartered and politically controlled banks, see: Wright to Flagg, Washington, 10 December 1839, Flagg Papers, N. Y. Pub. Lib.; Report of James H. Woodworth et al., members of the Select Joint Committee on the State Bank, 21 January 1840, Illinois Legislative Reports, 1839-1840 (Springfield, 1840), 258; Mackenzie, Butler and Hoyt, note on page 28 and note on page 105.

18. Schlesinger, Age of Jackson, 161-164, 231 (quoting Theophilus Fisk), 313 (quoting Orestes Brownson), and 318-321; editorial, Washington Globe, 1 July 1840.

19. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., in his Age of Jackson, pages 172-173 and 186-187, describes Leggett and Rantoul as being radicals, at least during the 1830's. He devotes a chapter, pages 267-282, to exposing "The Whig Counter-Reformation,"--that is, the masking of High Federalist purposes behind equalitarian language. A careful reading of the writings of Leggett and Rantoul makes one wonder how Schlesinger distinquishes the true friend of the workingman from the pretender. See, for examples, Rantoul's article on education from the North American Review, October, 1838, and his "Address to the Workingmen of the United States," 1833, which are reprinted in: Hamilton, Writings of Rantoul, 94-95 and 249; or Leggett's argument against a tax-supported insane asylum or his denunciation of any governmental function other than the protection of property, in: Sedgwick, ed., Writings of Leggett, 1:80 and 162.

20. Schlesinger, Age of Jackson, 242-249; Charles M. Wiltse, John C. Calhoun: Nullifier, 1829-1839 (Indianapolis, c1949), 343-358; and: John C. Calhoun to James Edward Calhoun, Washington, 7 September 1837; to Anna Maria Calhoun, Washington, 8 September 1837; to Dr. Danall[?], Ft. Hill, [near Pendleton, S. C.], draft, 28 October 1838; to Armistead Burt, Washington, 24 December 1838; and to John Van Buren et al., Ft. Hill, 29 September 1841; all in: Corr. of Calhoun, 377-378, 378-379, 408-409, 423, and 493-494.

21. Sedgwick, ed., Writings of Leggett, 1:53 and 64-67; Sellers, Polk, Jacksonian, 279-280; Smith, Blair Family, 1:129 and 142; Russell B. Nye, George Bancroft: Brahmin Rebel (New York, 1944), 109, 110, and 119; George Bancroft, "The Office of the People in Art, Government, and Religion," reprinted ibid., 316-323; Marvin Meyers, The Jacksonian Persuasion: Politics and Belief (Stanford, Cal., 1957), 11-23; William Nisbet Chambers, Old Bullion Benton: Senator from the New West (Boston, c1956), 208 and 232.

22. Van Buren, Message to Congress, 3 December 1838, in: Richardson, Messages and Papers of Presidents, 3:491; Van Buren, Message to Congress, 2 December 1839, ibid., 542-547; Robert Gray Gunderson, The Log-Cabin Campaign (Lexington, Ky., 1957), 227-230; Chambers, Old Bullion Benton, 231-232; Benton, Thirty Years' View, 2:55-56, 65, 86, and 89-91; Garraty, Wright, 190.

23. Schlesinger, Age of Jackson, 257-265.

24. Calhoun to James Edward Calhoun, Washington, 7 September 1837; to Dr. Danall[?], Ft. Hill, 26 October 1838, draft; to Joel R. Poinsett, Ft. Hill, 28 April 1839; to James Edward Calhoun, Washington, 1 February 1840; all in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 377, 406-410, 424-425, and 444-445; Van Buren to A. C. Flagg, Washington, 28 December 1839, Flagg Papers, Col. Univ. Lib.; Wiltse, Calhoun: Nullifier, 346-363, 384-386, and 407-408; Sellers, Polk: Jacksonian, 328.

25. Wiltse, Calhoun: Nullifier, 366-373, 388-391, 396-405, and 407-410; Calhoun to George McDuffie, Ft. Hill, 4 December 1843, in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 553.

26. William Allen to Allen G. Thurman, [Washington], 17 January 1838, Allen G. Thurman Papers, Ohio Historical Society Library, Columbus, O.; Wright to Flagg, Washington, 25 March 1838, Flagg Papers, N. Y. Pub. Lib.; John C. Calhoun to James H. Hammond, Washington, 25 January 1840, in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 443; Garraty, Wright, 153-157 and 161-163; and Bray Hammond, Banks and Politics, 496-497 and 542-543.

27. Van Buren, Message to Congress, 4 September 1837, in: Richardson, comp., Messages and Papers of Presidents, 3:342.

28. Enos T. Throop to Van Buren, New York City, 28 January and 10 and 13 May 1837, Van Buren Papers, L. C.; Edward Curtis to N. P. Tallmadge, New York City, 28 August 1839, Tallmadge Papers, St. Hist. Soc. Wis.; Hammond, History of Political Parties in New York, 2:462, 464, 470-472, and 475-479; Chambers, Old Bullion Benton, 217, 224, 233-237, 260-262, and 266-270; Allen G. Thurman to ----- Hough, Chillicothe, O., 9 February 1836, "substance of a letter," Thurman Papers, O. Hist. Soc. Lib.; Charles Clifford Huntington, A History of Banking and Currency in Ohio Before the Civil War (Columbus, O., 1915), 149-155; Edgar Allen Holt, Party Politics in Ohio, 1840-1850 (Columbus, O., 1931), 20; Archer H. Shaw, 1842-1942; The Plain Dealer; One Hundred Years in Cleveland (New York, 1942), 58.

29. Bassett, Life of Jackson, 475-496, 567-583, and 692-697; Schlesinger, Age of Jackson, 344-349.

30. Robert Rantoul, Jr., to Levi Woodbury, Gloucester, Mass., 20 July 1837, Van Buren Papers, L. C.; William Haywood, Jr., to Van Buren, 21 November 1837, in: Elizabeth G. McPherson, ed., "Unpublished Letters from North Carolinians to Van Buren," North Carolina Historical Review, 15(1938):72; William Allen to Allen G. Thurman, /Washington/, 6 March 1838, Thurman Papers, O. Hist. Soc. Lib.; James Buchanan to David R. Porter, Lancaster, Pa., 22 October 1838, D. R. Porter Correspondence, W. W. Porter Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia; Albert Burton Moore, History of Alabama (rev. ed., University, Ala., c1934), 172-173; Henry D. Capers, The Life and Times of C. G. Memminger (Richmond, Va., 1893), 126-127; Louis Clinton Hatch, ed., Maine; A History (5 vols., New York, 1919), 2:231-233; Sellers, Polk: Jacksonian, 341-345, 354, and 361-377; James P. Shenton, Robert John Walker; A Politician from Jackson to Lincoln (New York, 1961), 27-29; Ernest M. Lander, "The Calhoun-Preston Feud, 1836-1842," South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine, 59(1958):24-37; Schlesinger, Age of Jackson, 257-265.

31. Spencer, Victor and Spoils, 90; Garraty, Wright, 157-158.

32. Wright to Flagg, Washington, 5 September 1837, Flagg Papers, N. Y. Pub. Lib. I have transformed Van Buren's message into direct discourse. Wright wrote: "The President requests me to ask you to tell Croswell that . . ."

33. Wright to Flagg, Washington, 29 September 1837, ibid.; Garraty, Wright, 157-159.

34. Ambler, Ritchie, 25-117 and 144-191. An opponent once slyly observed that "For fifteen years /Ritchie/ has ruled public opinion in Virginia, and in all that time he has never dissented from the majority;" quoted ibid., 97. C. W. Gooch, a Virginia Democrat, complained in 1835 of Ritchie's "doubts, difficulties and conscientious objections" to "every prominent and efficient measure of the /Jackson/ administration;" Gooch to Van Buren, 1835, in: "Ritchie Letters," Branch Hist. Papers, 3:255-262. Silas Wright commented in 1847, after Ritchie had failed Van Buren once more, that the editor had never abandoned the Magician out of unfriendliness, but only because of "want of firmness;" "in every crisis, since I have been connected with Congress . . . his fears had always driven him off in a tangent and destroyed his influence, after which his personal fidelity had brought him back again weak and wounded and powerless . . ." Wright to Van Buren, Canton, N. Y., 14 April 1847, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

35. Ambler, Ritchie, 26-27 and 192-214; Ritchie to Rives, /Richmond/, 10 August and 20 and 21 September 1837, and 5 June /1838/; and to Van Buren, /Richmond/, 2 July 1838; all in: "Ritchie Letters," Branch Hist. Papers, 3:223-225, 227, and 229-230.

36. John A. Dix to Van Buren, Washington, 27 March 1846, suggested that the Magician then understood how much trouble Croswell had caused, 1837-1840, though Dix thought he had not at the time; Francis W. Pickens to Van Buren, /Washington/, 9 February 1842, jokingly reminded Van Buren of the state of his health during the winter of 1837-1838. Both letters are in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.

37. Spencer, Victor and Spoils, 93-97; Garraty, Wright, 159-160; Schlesinger, Age of Jackson, 258.

38. Ambler, Ritchie, 203-212; James Buchanan to Andrew Jackson, Lancaster, Pa., 10 April 1839, rough draft, Letters and Drafts, Buchanan Papers, Hist. Soc. Pa.

39. Wright to Flagg, Washington, 21 June 1838 and 21 February 1840, Flagg Papers, N. Y. Pub. Lib.; Van Buren to Flagg, Washington, 28 December 1839, Flagg Papers, Col. Univ. Lib.

On the gubernatorial nomination, see: Wright to Flagg, Washington, 21 February and 10 March 1840, Flagg Papers, N. Y. Pub. Lib.; from the latter of which the quotations are taken. And see: Wright to Albert H. Tracy, Washington, 12 July 1840, Tracy Papers, N. Y. St. Lib.; and Garraty, Wright, 174-175.

40. Sellers, Polk: Jacksonian, 399-413; this is the most complete account of the pre-convention maneuvering and the decision not to make a nomination. See also: Schlesinger, Age of Jackson, 296-297; Meyer, Life and Times of Johnson, 433-442; Garraty, Wright, 184-186; and Wright to Flagg, Washington, 26 January and 10 March 1840, Flagg Papers, N. Y. Pub. Lib.

41. Reginald Charles McGrane, The Panic of 1837: Some Financial Problems of the Jacksonian Era (Chicago, c1924), 96-103; Bray Hammond, Banks and Politics, 451-545.

The Whig slogan was suggested by William H. Seward, in a letter to Tallmadge, Albany, 13 March 1840, Tallmadge Papers, St. Hist. Soc. Wis.

On the predisposition of the electorate, see: Gansevoort Melville to James K. Polk, New York, 26 October 1844, Polk Papers, L. C. Melville said that a canvass of the delegates to the New York Democratic state convention of 1840, about twelve weeks before the election, showed that Van Buren would lose his own state.

During the campaign it was the mass meetings and parades which attracted the most attention. Astute Democrats were more impressed by--and later were more determined to imitate--the thoroughness of the Whigs in canvassing to find out who would vote for Harrison and then seeing that they got to the polls and

(continued)

**41, continued:**

did so on election day. See: M. Birchard to -------, Washington, 14 October 1840, Van Buren Papers, L. C.; and Michael Hoffman to Flagg, Herkimer, N. Y., 1 October 1844, Flagg Papers, N. Y. Pub. Lib.

There is some evidence that the Democrats lacked hope and enthusiasm: William Taylor to James K. Polk, Manlius, N. Y., 17 October 1844; and John I. DeGraff to Polk, Schenectady, N. Y., 21 October 1844; both in the Polk Papers, L. C. Both Taylor and DeGraff remarked at the change for the better in morale, from 1840 to 1844; however, they may simply have been flattering Polk.

The unpopularity of a plan proposed by Van Buren's Secretary of War for the re-organization of the militia, and Van Buren's pacific foreign policy--especially his handling of the Canadian Insurrection and the Maine boundary dispute--also handicapped the Democrats. Ross Wilkins to James Buchanan, Detroit, 30 November 1841, Miscellaneous Correspondence, Buchanan Papers, Hist. Soc. Pa.; Holt, Party Politics in Ohio, 34.

On all these topics, and on other aspects of the election of 1840, see: Gunderson, Log-Cabin Campaign.

## Notes to Chapter III

1. Lewis to Richard K. Crallé, [Washington], 31 May 1842, in: Frederick W. Moore, ed., "Calhoun as Seen by His Political Friends: Letters of Duff Green, Dixon H. Lewis and Richard K. Crallé During the Period from 1831 to 1848," Publications of the Southern History Association 7(1903):358.

2. Gunderson, Log-Cabin Campaign, 12-18, 102-107, and 108-147; Schlesinger, Age of Jackson, 292-294, 304, and 392.

Schlesinger points out (note 69 on page 304) that with a shift of less than nine thousand votes Van Buren would have carried New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Maine, and won in the Electoral College, 150-144. Harrison's plurality in popular votes was only about 140,000 out of a total vote of nearly 2,500,000.

3. H. P. Hunt to James Buchanan, Troy, [N. Y.], 15 May 1843, Misc. Corr., Buchanan Papers, Hist. Soc. Pa.

Peter V. Daniel to Van Buren, near Richmond, Va., 16 December 1841; W. H. Roane to Van Buren, near Richmond, Va., 11 September 1843; George W. Hopkins to Van Buren, Washington, 4 March 1844; John Bragg to Van Buren, Mobile, Ala., 28 October 1843; W. R. Hallett to Van Buren, Mobile, Ala., 13 December 1843; Silas Wright to Van Buren, Washington, 3 April 1844; all in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.

Edmund Burke to Robert McClellan, Newport, N. H., 28 April 1843; Gideon Welles to Van Buren, Hartford, Conn., 29 April 1843; Perry Smith to Van Buren, New Milford, Conn., 22 May 1843; and George W. Barker to Van Buren, Montpelier, Vt., 18 October 1843; all ibid.

T. H. Benton to Van Buren, Washington, 14 and 17 April 1842; and Lewis F. Linn to Van Buren, Washington, 3 January and 3 August 1842; all ibid.

Samuel Medary to A. C. Flagg, Columbus, [O.], 29 December 1840, Flagg Papers, N. Y. Pub. Lib.; and William Allen to Van Buren, Chillicothe, O., 27 October 1841; Wright to Van Buren, Washington, 27 February 1843; M. Birchard to Van Buren, Warren, O., 31 August 1843; and John B. Weller to Van Buren, Washington, 4 March 1841; all in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.

Samuel Hart to Van Buren, Philadelphia, 28 June 1841; Henry D. Gilpin to Van Buren, Philadelphia, 14 November 1842 and 11 and 23 November 1843; and Henry Simpson to Van Buren, Philadelphia, 15 April 1843; all ibid.

Francis P. Blair to Van Buren, Washington, 4 September 1842 and 10 December 1843, ibid.

(continued)

3, continued:

George Bancroft to Van Buren, Boston, 23 November 1842, ibid.; also printed in: "Van Buren-Bancroft Correspondence, 1830-1845," Massachusetts Historical Society Proceedings, 42(1909):394-395.

John Fairfield to Van Buren, Saco, Me., 15 October 1842, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

See also: John Law to Van Buren, Indianapolis, 23 November and 10 December 1841; Nathaniel West to Van Buren, Indianapolis, 30 January 1842; and William Walters to Van Buren, Springfield, Ill., 3 February 1842; all ibid.

4. John C. Calhoun to R. M. T. Hunter, Ft. Hill, [near Pendleton, S. C.], 22 December 1843; and to Armistead Burt, Ft. Hill, 23 December 1843; both in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 555 and 557; Wright to Wm. H. Roane, Washington, 25 February 1843, New York Historical Society, New York City.

5. Van Buren Papers, L. C., 1841-1844, passim.

6. William Allen to Van Buren, Washington, 18 January 1843, ibid.

7. Robert McClellan to Van Buren, Washington, 24 July 1842; F. P. B[lair] to Van Buren, Washington, 4 September 1842; and Wm. Allen to Van Buren, Washington, 18 January 1843; all ibid.

8. Wright to Wm. H. Roane, Washington, 25 February 1843, N. Y. Hist. Soc.; Wright to A. C. Flagg, Washington, 25 February 1843; and to Van Buren, Washington, 19 and 27 February 1843; all in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.

In the last cited letter to Van Buren Wright said, "I have not a man to consult with, in our manner of consultation . . ."

9. Van Buren to Governor Thomas Reynolds of Missouri, Washington, 6 March 1841, printed in Niles Register, 60:52-53, 27 March 1841.

10. On the determination of Van Buren and his friends to base the election of 1844 on the issues of the 1830's, see, in addition to Van Buren's letter to Reynolds cited above, the following:

Moses Dawson to Van Buren, Cincinatti, O., 22 September 1841; Henry D. Gilpin to Van Buren, Philadelphia, 19 October 1841; John Forsyth [Jr.] to Van Buren, Columbus, Ga., 7 September 1843; Robert McClellan to Van Buren, Washington, 3 February 1844; and Resolutions of St. Albans, Vt., Democratic Association, quoted in: J. G. Smith et al., Committee of Correspondence, to Van Buren, St. Albans, 25 March 1844; all in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.

See also the following articles in the Washington Globe, in

(continued)

10,continued:

the issues indicated: editorial from the Portland, Me., Argus, reprinted 6 September 1842; editorial from Richmond Enquirer, reprinted 8 September 1842; letter to Thomas Ritchie to /Committee of inviation to meeting at Schocco Springs, N. C./, Richmond, 1 September 1842, printed 19 October 1842; address of Democratic-Republicans of the sixteenth New York congressional district, printed 28 October 1842; editorial, 16 November 1842; and resolutions of the New Hampshire Democratic state convention, printed 17 November 1842.

By inviting him to attend their meetings and by adopting complimentary resolutions to which he might respond, local party groups gave Van Buren opportunities to emphasis the Jackson-Van Buren platform and his own association with it. The following examples in the Van Buren Papers, L. C., are typical of many similar items: Democratic members of the New York legislature to Van Buren, Albany, 25 May 1841, and a draft of Van Buren's reply, Kinderhook, N. Y., 5 June 1841; officers of the 9th Ward Democratic convention /sic/ to Van Buren, New York City, 28 August 1841, and a draft of Van Buren's reply, Kinderhook, 4 September 1841; Van Buren to "Gentlemen," n. p., October 1841, draft of a reply to a Maryland group; and Edmund B. Bill et al., Committee of a Democratic meeting in DuPage Co., Ill., to Van Buren, Naperville, Ill., 23 November 1841, and a draft of Van Buren's reply, n. p., n. d., on the back of Bill's letter.

For examples of Democratic charges that the Whigs had stolen the election of 1840, see: Bedford Brown to Van Buren, Caswell, N. C., 17 February 1841, in: McPherson, ed., "Letters of North Carolinians to Van Buren, N. C. H. R., 15:140; Van Buren to Jackson, Kinderhook, N. Y., 19 October 1842; and W. Selden to Van Buren, Washington, 25 November 1843; both in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.; Garraty, Wright, 188-192; and the following articles in the Washington Globe, in the issues indicated: editorials, 29 and 30 July, 21 and 30 September, and 25 October 1842; article from Albany Argus, reprinted 12 September 1842; speech of Robert Rantoul, Jr., reprinted from the Bay State Democrat, 3 November 1842; article on Governor Marcus Morton's message to the Massachusetts legislature, 23 January 1843.

11. Wright to Wm. H. Roane, Washington, 25 February 1843, N. Y. Hist. Soc.

12. Ray W. Irwin, "Charles Stewart," in: Allen Johnson, Dumas Malone, et al., eds., The Dictionary of American Biography (20 vols. and supplements, New York, 1928- ), 18:6-7; Meyer, Life and Times of Johnson, 90-136; Frank Bury Woodford, Lewis Cass, the Last Jeffersonian (New Brunswick, N. J., 1950), 57-89.

13. Proceedings of a meeting of Philadelphia Democrats, 3 May 1841, and proceedings of meetings of the Old Ironsides Club of Southwark, No. 1, 13 and 24 May 1841, including correspondence of Stephen B. Kingston et al., Committee, with Stewart, all printed in: Niles Register, 60:181-182 and 215-216, 22 May and 5 June 1841.

David R. Porter to Robert M. Barr, Harrisburg, Pa., 15 June 1841; and Barr to James Buchanan, Reading, Pa., 24 June 1841; both in: Misc. Corr., Buchanan Papers, Hist. Soc. Pa.; Benjamin Rush to Philip Schuyler, Philadelphia, 18 November 1841, N. Y. Hist. Soc.; and H. D. Gilpin to Van Buren, Philadelphia, 18 June 1841, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

Late in December, 1841, Jeremiah S. Black of Pennsylvania reported to Senator Buchanan that the Stewart movement was dead, adding that "These drum and trumpet things are poor materials after all to work with." Letter of 27 December 1841, J. S. Black Letters, Buchanan Papers, Hist. Soc. Pa.

14. Niles Register, 61:400, 19 February 1842, reported the nomination.

On Johnson's popularity, see: Schlesinger, Age of Jackson, 435; James Buchanan to George G. Leiper, Lancaster, Pa., 22 July 1843, Letters and Drafts, Buchanan Papers, Hist. Soc. Pa.; Aaron V. Brown to James K. Polk, Washington, [23 January 1844], Polk Papers, L. C.; and: James Ross Snowden to Van Buren, Harrisburg, Pa., 20 January 1844; and Albert H. Tracy to Van Buren, Buffalo, N. Y., 22 April 1844; both in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.

Van Buren's willingness to accept Johnson as his running mate is mentioned in: Wright to Van Buren, Washington, 20 February 1844, ibid.

15. John W. Forney to James Buchanan, Lancaster, Pa., 24 January, 4 February, 4 March, and 7 and 16 June 1842, John W. Forney Letters, Buchanan Papers, Hist. Soc. Pa.; James Snyder to Buchanan, Harrisburg, Pa., 3 January 1843, Misc. Corr., ibid.; Simon Cameron to Buchanan, Middletown, Pa., 21 February, and 5 and 9 March 1842, Simon Cameron Letters, ibid.; Buchanan to F. R. Shunk, Washington, 24 January 1843, Letters and Drafts, ibid.; David R. Porter to Buchanan, Harrisburg, Pa., 20 February 1842, Misc. Corr., ibid.

John Davis to Van Buren, Davisville, Pa., 16 November 1842; and Circular of William Overfield et al., Committee to Welcome Col. Johnson to Pennsylvania, n. p., 7 September 1842; both in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.

John Reynolds, veteran politician of southern Illinois, and Senator Ambrose H. Sevier of Arkansas supported Johnson. The Colonel also claimed the support of Congressman Archibald Yell of Arkansas and sought that of Senator Robert J. Walker of Mississ-

(continued)

15, continued:

ippi. Theodore Calvin Pease, The Frontier State, 1818-1848 (Vol. 2, 1918, of: C. W. Alvord, ed., Centennial History of Illinois, 6 vols., Springfield, Ill., 1917-1920), 275-276; Forney to Buchanan, Lancaster, Pa., 4 February 1842, Forney Letters, Buchanan Papers, Hist. Soc. Pa.; Richard M. Johnson to Robert J. Walker, White Sulphur, Ky., 29 April 1842, New York Historical Society.

16. /John M. McCalla/ to Van Buren, Frankfort, Ky., 11 January 1843; T. P. Moore to Van Buren, Frankfort, Ky., 11 February 1843; and F. P. Blair to Van Buren, Washington, 25 June 1843; all in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.

17. /McCalla/ to Van Buren, Frankfort, Ky., 11 January 1843, ibid.

18. Woodford, Cass, 57-89. Cass was an aide to General William H. Harrison at the Battle of the Thames.

19. Ibid., 203-206.

20. /Lewis Cass/, "An Examination of the Question, Now in Discussion, between the American and British Governments, Concerning the Right of Search; by an American," Niles Register, 62:54-60, 26 March 1842.

21. Rives to Cass, Washington, 12 June 1842, from which the quotation is taken, and 13 August 1842, Lewis Cass Papers, Clements Library, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

22. Enos T. Throop to Van Buren, Paris, France, 27 September 1842; Henry D. Gilpin to Van Buren, Philadelphia, 23 November 1842; and William L. Marcy to Van Buren, Albany, 10 December 1842; all in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.; and George Bancroft to Van Buren, Boston, 23 November 1842, ibid., and in: "Van Buren-Bancroft Corr.," Mass. Hist. Soc. Proc., 42:394.

23. Report of Harrisburg meeting, Washington Globe, 26 November 1842; Levi Reynolds to Cass, Harrisburg, Pa., 28 December 1842, Cass Papers, Clements Lib.; editorial from New York Herald, reprinted in Niles Register, 63:214, 26 November 1842. Reynolds and his two colleagues on the Pennsylvania Canal Board, who were appointees of Governor Porter, were among the sponsors of the Cass meeting in Harrisburg.

24. Niles Register, 63:97, 15 October 1842; Enos T. Throop to Van Buren, Paris, France, 28 October 1842, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

25. Niles Register, 63:226, 10 December 1842, reported Cass's arrival in Boston. On Cass's role in the Bank War see: Schlesinger, Age of Jackson, 101; Van Buren, Autobiography, 608; Charles Jared Ingersoll to Nicholas Biddle, Washington, 21 February 1832,

(continued)

25, continued:

in: Reginald Charles McGrane, ed., The Correspondence of Nicholas Biddle Dealing with National Affairs, 1807-1844 (Boston and New York, 1919), 183.

Cass was feted at Boston by David Henshaw, Charles G. Greene, and other anti-Van Buren Democrats, and by such Whigs as Abbott Lawrence and Josiah Quincy, Jr.; Sam T. Armstrong et al., to Cass, Boston, 7 December 1842, Cass Papers, Clements Lib.

On Whig support of Cass and Democratic doubts about his orthodoxy, see: Nathaniel West to Van Buren, Indianapolis, 30 January 1842; and Bancroft to Van Buren, Boston, 23 November 1842; both in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.; John C. Calhoun to James H. Hammond, [O'Bar] Mine, Ga., 24 September [1842], misdated and misfiled 1841, in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 490; and John W. Forney to James Buchanan, Lancaster, Pa., 15 December 1842, Forney Letters, Buchanan Papers, Hist. Soc. Pa.

26. Mahlon Dickerson to Cass, New York, 10 December 1842; and Cass to Dickerson, New York, 10 December 1842; both in: Washington Globe, 14 December 1842, and Niles Register, 63:247, 17 December 1842.

Cass to G. O Whittemore, Detroit, 28 February 1843, Washington Globe, 9 March 1843; Cass, reply to Indiana Democratic state convention, n. d., draft, Cass Papers, Clements Lib., and printed in the Washington Globe, 4 May 1843; Cass to John H. Dew, Detroit, 10 October 1843, Cass Papers, Clements Lib.

27. James Buchanan to Dr. J. M. Foltz, Washington, 14 December 1842, typed copy, Misc. Corr., Buchanan Papers, Hist. Soc. Pa.; Cave Johnson to James K. Polk, Washington, 18 December 1842; and Isaac G. McKinley to Polk, Harrisburg, Pa., 3 June 1844; both in the Polk Papers, L. C.; and Andrew Jackson to Van Buren, the Hermitage, [near Nashville, Tenn.], 7 February 1844, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

One of Cass's Democratic friends warned him not to speak so kindly of William H. Harrison, because it was charged that Cass had favored Harrison's election in 1840. Levi Reynolds to Cass, Harrisburg, Pa., 28 December 1842, Cass Papers, Clements Lib.

28. Proceedings of Kentucky Democratic state convention, Washington Globe, 26 January 1843.

On Cass's tour, see: article from Cincinatti Enquirer, reprinted in the Washington Globe, 13 February 1843; and article from Detroit Daily Gazette, reprinted ibid., 24 February 1843.

29. Curtis, Buchanan, 1:1-15, 23, 31-37, and 74-92; Philip Shriver Klein, President James Buchanan; A Biography (University Park, Pa., c1962), 7-102 and 111.

30. Snyder, Jacksonian Heritage, 50-61, 63, 82-87, and 93; Buchanan to Van Buren, Washington, 19 February 1837, Van Buren Papers, L. C.; Buchanan to Porter, Washington, 27 January 1838, Lancaster, Pa., 1 and 6 November 1838, Washington, 15 December 1838, 3, 9, and 28 December 1839, and 8 and 13 January, 24 February, and 15 December 1840; all in: D. R. Porter Letters, W. W. Porter Papers, Hist. Soc. Pa.; Buchanan to Porter, Washington, 30 May 1840 and 9 and 17 February 1841, ibid., and printed in: Curtis, Buchanan, 1:453-455.

Buchanan to John B. Sterigere, Lancaster, Pa., 2 November 1838, Letters and Drafts, Buchanan Papers, Hist. Soc. Pa.; Buchanan to George G. Leiper, Lancaster, 23 October 1841, ibid., and in: Curtis, Buchanan, 1:456.

Klein, Pres. Buchanan, 107-137.

31. Some of Buchanan's friends in Pennsylvania attempted to launch electioneering efforts for him outside the state, but he disapproved and countermanded them. John W. Forney to Buchanan, Lancaster, Pa., 10 December 1841, and 9 January 1842, Forney Letters, Buchanan Papers, Hist. Soc. Pa.; Simon Cameron to Buchanan, Middletown, Pa., 14 January, 20 March, and 24 June 1842, Cameron Letters, ibid.; John B. Butler to Buchanan, Pittsburgh, 27 December 1841, Misc. Corr., ibid.; Silas Wright to Van Buren, Washington, 12 January 1842, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

In private, Buchanan repeatedly asserted that Van Buren could not carry Pennsylvania, but he always added that this was not the Magician's fault and that Pennsylvania Democrats must do their best for him if he was renominated. Buchanan to Porter, Washington, 10 December 1841, D. R. Porter Letters, W. W. Porter Papers, Hist. Soc. Pa.; Buchanan to Campbell P. White, Washington, 17 December 1841, and Lancaster, Pa., 27 July 1843, both in the New York Historical Society; Buchanan to Thomas W. Gilmer, Lancaster, Pa., 20 October 1843, in: "Original Letters," William and Mary Quarterly, 20(1911-1912):118-119.

See also Buchanan's acceptance of a presidential nomination by a convention of his friends at Harrisburg in January, 1843: Buchanan to B. Crispin, H. B. Wright, et al., Washington, 2 February 1843, draft, Letters and Drafts, Buchanan Papers, Hist. Soc. Pa., and printed in the Washington Globe, 2 March 1843.

32. Simon Cameron to Buchanan, Middletown, Pa., 5 March 1842, Cameron Letters, Buchanan Papers, Hist. Soc. Pa.; Hendrick B. Wright to Buchanan, [Harrisburg], 2 February 1843; and David R. Porter to Robert M. Barr, Harrisburg, 15 June 1841; both in Misc.

(continued)

32, continued:

Corr., ibid.; Buchanan to Porter, Washington, 13 and 22 February and 7 April 1842, D. R. Porter Letters, W. W. Porter Papers, Hist. Soc. Pa.; Porter to Buchanan, Harrisburg, 20 February 1842, Misc. Corr., Buchanan Papers, Hist. Soc. Pa.

John W. Forney to Buchanan, Lancaster, 24 January, 4 February, 4 March, and 7 June 1842, Forney Letters, ibid.; Simon Cameron to Buchanan, Middletown, Pa., 21 February and 5 and 9 March 1842, Cameron Letters, ibid.; Hendrick B. Wright to Buchanan, Philadelphia, 10 January 1843, Misc. Corr., ibid.; Stephen Simpson to Buchanan, Philadelphia, 13 January 1843, ibid.; and David Lynch to Buchanan, Harrisburg, 13 January 1843, ibid.

33. Forney to Buchanan, Lancaster, 24 January and 4 February 1842, Forney Letters, ibid.; Cameron to Buchanan, Middletown, Pa., 14 January 1842, Cameron Letters, ibid.; A. C. Roumfort to Buchanan, Harrisburg, 5 January 1843, Misc. Corr., ibid.; John B. Butler to Buchanan, Harrisburg, 7 January 1843, ibid.; Henry R. Mueller, The Whig Party in Pennsylvania (New York, 1922), 87-90; Washington Globe, editorials, 6, 10, and 11 March 1843 and passim, March and April 1843; editorials reprinted from the Philadelphia Pennsylvanian, ibid., 13 and 15 March 1843; editorial from Harrisburg, Pa., Keystone, reprinted ibid., 5 April 1843; and articles on the consolidation of the Democratic newspapers at Harrisburg, ibid., 9 and 10 June 1843.

34. George S. Wharton to Buchanan, Philadelphia, 7 December 1841; Robert M. Barr to Buchanan, Reading, Pa., 19 December 1841; George G. Leiper to Buchanan, Leiperville, Pa., 19 May 1842, enclosing a copy of Leiper to /Muhlenberg/, 25 April 1842; George Plitt to Buchanan, Reading, 4 July and 10 December 1843; and Hendrick B. Wright to Buchanan, Wilkes Barre, Pa., 4 December 1843; all in Misc. Corr., Buchanan Papers, Hist. Soc. Pa.; John M. Read to Buchanan, Philadelphia, 7 December 1843, J. M. Read Letters, ibid.; and Simon Cameron to Buchanan, Middletown, Pa., 14 January 1842 and 28 August, and 9 and 19 September 1843, Cameron Letters, ibid.

The call of the state convention, by the Pennsylvania Democratic legislative caucus, is printed in the Washington Globe, 24 April 1843.

35. Oliver Perry Chitwood, John Tyler: Champion of the Old South (New York, c1939), 283-285, 369-370, and note on 373; Lyon G. Tyler, The Letters and Times of the Tylers (2 vols., Richmond, 1885), 2:32-34, 42-52, 55-57, 64, and 71.

36. William B. Lewis to Andrew Jackson, Washington, 6 December 1841, copy, Wm. B. Lewis-Andrew Jackson Letters, New York Public Library, from which the quotation is taken; Aaron Vanderpoel to Van Buren, New York City, 10 August 1841, Van Buren Papers, L. C.;

(continued)

36, continued:

R. K. Crallé to John C. Calhoun, Lynchburg, Va., 8 October 1841, in: Chauncey S. Boucher and Robert P. Brooks, eds., Correspondence Addressed to John C. Calhoun, 1837-1849 (Vol. 2 of American Historical Association, Annual Report, 1929, Washington, 1930), 161-162.

During the fall of 1841, when most of Tyler's Cabinet resigned, he replaced them with Whigs who had, like himself, once been Democrats. Chitwood, Tyler, 280.

37. Jackson to Wm. B. Lewis, the Hermitage, 28 December 1841, Lewis-Jackson Letters, N. Y. Pub. Lib.; Washington Globe, editorials, 1842 and 1843, passim, especially 20 August 1842, 11 November 1842, 7 December 1842, 14 February 1843, and 10 March 1843; Smith, Blair Family, 1:151-153, 155-157, and 161-162; Blair to Van Buren, Washington, 25 June 1843, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

Gouverneur Kemble to Joel R. Poinsett, Cold Springs, [N.Y.], 15 November 1842, J. R. Poinsett Section, Gilpin Papers, Hist. Soc. Pa.; Aaron Vanderpoel to Van Buren, New York City, 10 August 1841; John W. Edmonds to Van Buren, New York City, 21 August 1841; Wright to Blair, Washington, 19 December 1842; and Wm. H. Roane to Van Buren, Richmond, Va., 11 September 1843; all in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.; Charles Henry Ambler, "Virginia and the Presidential Succession, 1840-1844," Essays in American History Dedicated to Frederick Jackson Turner (New York, 1910), 169-174; Pease, Frontier State, 274-275.

38. R. K. Crallé to Calhoun, Lynchburg, Va., 8 October 1841, in: Boucher and Brooks, eds., Corr. Addressed to Calhoun, 162; Calhoun to Thomas G. Clemson, Washington, 13 June 1841; to Andrew P. Calhoun, Washington, 12 September 1841; to Wilson Lumpkin, Washington, 26 December 1841; to Thomas G. Clemson, Washington, 3 April 1842; to Duff Green, Washington, 31 August 1842; and to Thomas G. Clemson, Washington, 6 February 1843; all in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 477-478, 487-489, 499-500, 508-510, 515-516, and 524-525.

39. Chitwood, Tyler, 219, 238-239, 244-246, 291-293, 299-300, 317-319, 353-354, 369-370, and 372-374.

The term "national bank" is here used as regular Democrats used it during the early 1840's, to designate any federal financial institution other than the Treasury Department. The distinction between the "fiscal institution" which Tyler considered constitutional and the Independent Treasury upon which Democrats insisted may have been purely nominal. If so, that is even stronger evidence of Tyler's unwillingness to surrender to the regular Democrats and of their determination to quarrel with him. The same might be said of the differences between Tyler's proposals and the bills which the Whig majorities in Congress passed and which he vetoed.

40. Roy Franklin Nichols, Franklin Pierce: Young Hickory of the Granite Hills (Philadelphia, 1931), 118-120; Pease, Frontier State, 274; James K. Polk to John C. Calhoun, Columbia, Tenn., 23 February 1842; in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 845; Gouverneur Kemble to Joel R. Poinsett, Cold Springs, N. Y., 15 November 1842, Poinsett Section, Gilpin Papers, Hist. Soc. Pa.; Samuel J. Bayard to Joseph H. Larwill, Fairfield, Iowa Terr., 5 January 1845, Joseph and John Larwill Papers, Ohio Historical Society Library, Columbus, O.; and the following letters to Van Buren in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.: Sidney Breese, Clinton Co., Ill., 21 March 1843; J. Turrill, Oswego, N. Y., 10 May 1843; George H. McWhorter, Oswego, N. Y., 1 June 1843; Silas Wright, Canton, N. Y., 19 June 1843; and John Danforth, New London, Conn., 24 August 1843.

41. Calhoun to F. W. Pickens, /Washington/, 4 January 1834; to Christopher VanDeventer, Washington, 25 January 1834; to Lewis S. Coryell, Ft. Hill, /near Pendleton, S. C./, 10 August 1843; to R. M. T. Hunter, Ft. Hill, June 1837; and to Duff Green, Ft. Hill, 26 June and 27 July 1837; all in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 326-330, 340, and 371-377.

42. J. J. Crittenden to Willie P. Mangum, Washington, 11 October 1837; and William C. Preston to Mangum, Washington, /4 October 1837/, 28 March 1838, and 7 April 1838; all in: Shanks, ed., Mangum Papers, 2:511-512, 508-510, 516-518, and 519-520, respectively; R. P. Letcher to /Henry Clay/, Lancaster, /Ky.?/, 6 April 1839, Tallmadge Papers, St. Hist. Soc. Wis.; Wm. C. Preston to Nathaniel Beverley Tucker, Washington, 18 February 1840, in: "Corr. of Tucker," Wm. and Mary Qrtrly, 12:142; Lander, "Calhoun-Preston Feud," S. C. Hist. and Genl. Mag., 59: 24-37; George McDuffie to Calhoun, 29 October 1837, in: Boucher and Brooks, eds., Corr. Addressed to Calhoun, 155-158; Duff Green to Calhoun, Baltimore, 21 August 1840, in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 828-829; Wiltse, Calhoun: Nullifier, 343-361 and 377-393.

43. Silas Wright to A. C. Flagg, Washington, 31 January 1836, Flagg Papers, N. Y. Pub. Lib.; Thomas Ritchie to Van Buren, /Richmond/, 2 July 1838, in: "Ritchie Letters," Branch Hist. Papers, 3:229-230; Thomas Hart Benton to Van Buren, /Washington/, 16 August 1842; Wright to Van Buren, Washington, 27 January 1843; Wm. H. Roane to Van Buren, Richmond, 11 September 1843; and J. Bragg to Van Buren, Mobile, Ala., 28 October 1843; all in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.; and Cave Johnson to James K. Polk, Washington, 29 January 1843, Polk Papers, L. C.

44. Calhoun to James H. Hammond, /O'Bar/ Mine, Ga., 24 September /1842/, misdated and misfiled 1841, in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 489-493, expresses sentiments typical of those in many other letters by Calhoun during the period 1841-1843, ibid.

45. Calhoun to Anna Maria Calhoun, Washington, 8 September 1837; to Armistead Burt, Washington, 24 December 1838; to James H. Hammond, Washington, 25 January, 23 February, 2 April, and 5 July 1840; to James Edward Calhoun, Washington, 12 February 1840; and to Andrew Pickens Calhoun, /Washington/, 8 June 1840; all in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 379-461, passim.

46. Calhoun to Frederick H. Sanford et al., Washington, 23 February 1841; to Thomas G. Clemson, Washington, 13 June and 23 July 1841; and to James H. Hammond, Washington, 1 August 1841; all ibid., 476-478, 482, and 484-485.

47. F. W. Pickens to Calhoun, Edgewood, S. C., 12 October 1841; and Wilson H. Lumpkin to Calhoun, Athens, /Ga/, 26 October 1841; both in: Boucher and Brooks, eds., Corr. Addressed to Calhoun, 163-166; J. H. Howard to Calhoun, Columbus, Ga., 27 October 1841; Calhoun to James Edward Calhoun, Ft. Hill, 1 November 1841; and Calhoun to Armistead Burt, Ft. Hill, 28 November 1841; all in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 829-832, 495, and 497, respectively.

48. Lumpkin to Calhoun, Athens, /Ga./, 26 October 1841; and John H. Howard to Calhoun, Milledgeville, Ga., 13 November 1841; both in: Boucher and Brooks, eds., Corr. Addressed to Calhoun, 164-167; Wilson Lumpkin to Calhoun, Athens, Ga., 15 November 1841, in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 832-834; J. R. Poinsett to Van Buren, Columbia, /S. C./, 28 November 1841, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

49. J. A. Stuart to Calhoun, Charleston, 19 November 1841; Calhoun to Lumpkin, Washington, 26 December 1841; and Calhoun to Thomas G. Clemson, Washington, 31 December 1841; all in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 834-838, 499-500, and 500-501, respectively.

50. Proceedings of Democratic meeting at Salisbury, N. C., 20 May 1842, in: Niles Register, 62:242-243, 18 June 1842; Dixon H. Lewis to Richard K. Crallé, /Washington/, 30 and 31 May 1842, in: Moore, ed., "Green-Lewis-Crallé Letters," Pubns. of S. H. A., 7:357-358; James G. de R. Hamilton, "Party Politics in North Carolina, 1835-1860," James Sprunt Historical Publications, 15(1916):83-84.

51. That a recognition of his weakness was a motive of Van Buren's caution was admitted by his son, John Van Buren. When it was suggested, early in 1842, that the Democratic legislators in New York should nominate Van Buren to the Presidency, young Van Buren and other men close to the Magician vetoed the proposal on the grounds that it would unite his enemies. Gouverneur Kemble to Joel R. Poinsett, Cold Springs, /N. Y./, 14 October 1842, Poinsett Section, Gilpin Papers, Hist. Soc. Pa.

See also: Wright to Van Buren, Washington, 12 January 1842, Van Buren Papers, L. C.; and Wright to John L. Russell, Washington, 18 June 1843, in: Gillet, Life and Times of Wright, 2:1327-1328.

52. Cave Johnson to James K. Polk, Washington, 18 December 1842, Polk Papers, L. C.

53. Gilpin to Van Buren, Philadelphia, 19 October 1841, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

Notes to Chapter IV

1. Pickens to John C. Calhoun, Edgewood, /S. C./, in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 864.

2. McClellan to Samuel J. Tilden, /Washington/, Samuel J. Tilden Papers, New York Public Library, New York City.

3. Andrew Flick et al. to Henry Horn, Philadelphia, 19 November 1842; Horn to Flick, et al., Philadelphia, 19 November 1842; Horn to Van Buren, Philadelphia, 13 November 1841; and Van Buren to Horn, Kinderhook, N. Y., 26 November 1841; all reprinted from the Philadelphia Pennsylvanian in the Washington Globe, 23 November 1842, and in Niles Register, 26 November 1842. See also: Garraty, Wright, 239-240.

Van Buren had received reports that his reply to the Democrats of Missouri in 1841 was being interpreted as an unconditional refusal to run again. R. Wallace to Van Buren, Warrenton, Va., 12 September 1842, and J. R. Poinsett to Van Buren, Washington, 13 September 1842, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

There is a draft and a fair copy of Van Buren's letter to Horn ibid.

4. Wiltse, Calhoun: Nullifier, 183-186 and 190-193; Charles M. Wiltse, John C. Calhoun: Sectionalist, 1840-1850 (Indianapolis, c1951), 74-76; Silas Wright to Elam Tilden, Washington, 6 December 1841, Tilden Papers, N. Y. Pub. Lib.; Robert Orr to James Buchanan, n. p., 29 January 1842, Misc. Corr., Buchanan Papers, Hist. Soc. Pa.; George Tibbetts to N. P. Tallmadge, Troy, /N. Y./, 25 February 1842, Tallmadge Papers, St. Hist. Soc. Wis.; report of state convention of coal and iron producers at Harrisburg, Pa., 23 February 1842, in Niles Register, 63:32, 12 March 1842; report of inaugural address of Governor Chauncey F. Cleaveland of Connecticut, 6 May 1842, printed ibid., 62:165, 14 May 1842.

5. Chitwood, Tyler, 294-304; Wiltse, Calhoun: Sectionalist, 80-88; Garraty, Wright, 223-227; Chambers, Old Bullion Benton, 256; John G. Floyd to Flagg, Washington, 6 August 1842, and Silas Wright to Flagg, Washington, 26 and 29 August 1842, Flagg Papers, N. Y. Pub. Lib.; Thomas Hart Benton to Van Buren, /Washington/, 16 August 1842, and Robert McClellan to Van Buren, /Washington/, 23 August 1842, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

6. Francis P. Blair to Van Buren, Washington, 4 September 1842, ibid.; Calhoun to James H. Hammond, /O'Bar/ Mine, Ga., 24 September /1842/, (misdated and misfiled 1841) in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 491.

7. Silas Wright, remarks in the Senate, 27 August 1842, Congressional Globe, 27th Cong., 2nd sess., 953-955, also printed in: Gillet, Life and Times of Wright, 2:1422-1424; Garraty, Wright, 226-227.

8. Michael Hoffman to Flagg, Herkimer, /N. Y./, 24 November 1842, Flagg Papers, N. Y. Pub. Lib.; F. P. B/lair/ to Van Buren, Washington, 4 September 1842; William Allen to Van Buren, Washington, 18 January 1843; and /Wm. R. Hallett/ to Van Buren, Mobile, /Ala./, 16 February 1843; all in Van Buren Papers, L. C. See also: editorial from Richmond Enquirer, reprinted in Niles Register, 63: 83-84, 8 October 1842.

Though never critical of Wright, the Washington Globe ran editorials denouncing the Tariff Act of 1842 in every issue during September and October, 1842, and frequently thereafter.

9. Calhoun to Duff Green, Washington, 31 August 1842; Calhoun to James H. Hammond, /O'Bar/ Mine, Ga., 24 September /1842/; and Hammond to Calhoun, Silver Bluff, /S.C./, 10 September 1842; all in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 516, 490-492, and 850 respectively.

10. Editorial from Albany, N. Y., Argus, reprinted in Niles Register, 63:84, 8 October 1842; /Franklin, (pseud.)/, "A Tariff for Revenue or a Tariff for Protection," reprinted from Albany Argus ibid., 63:217, 3 December 1842; Franklin H. Elmore to Calhoun, Charleston, S. C., 2 November 1842, in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 857-858; editorial from Charleston Mercury on the tariff, the Albany Argus, and the New York Democratic state convention, 24 November 1842, reprinted in Niles Register, 63:217-218, 3 December 1842.

"Franlin's" communication to the Argus, entitled "A Tariff for Revenue or a Tariff for Protection," was reprinted in the Washington Globe, 21 October 1842, with the psuedonymous signature omitted, so that it appeared to have been an editorial. It was this version of the article to which the Mercury so vehemently responded. Washington Globe, 17 December 1842. But the Mercury was not so much mistaken as it might appear to have been, for the editorial from the Argus reprinted by Niles Register and cited above, set forth views very similar to those of "Franklin" and it was not the practice of such papers as the Argus to open their columns to those who greatly disagreed with their editor. In another editorial in the Argus, reprinted in the Washington Globe of 14 December 1842, Edwin Croswell, editor of the Argus, advocated a tariff primarily for revenue with incidental protection for American producers.

Senator Wright was very annoyed by the handling of his vote for the Tariff of 1842 by the Argus. Wright to Van Buren, 27 January 1843, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

On the effort to pin Wright's vote on Van Buren, see: R. Wallace to Van Buren, Warrenton, Va., 12 September 1842, and Wright to Van Buren, Washington, 27 January 1843, ibid.

11. Report of the Committee on Federal Relations, South Carolina Legislature, in: Niles Register, 63:345, 28 January 1843; extract of message to legislature from the Governor of Georgia, in: Washington Globe, 15 November 1842; report of anti-tariff meeting at Jackson, Miss., ibid., 3 December 1842; report of Democratic meeting at Beaufort, S. C., ibid., 3 April 1843; F. W. Pickens to Calhoun, Edgewood, [S.C.], 8 November 1842, in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 862-864.

12. Cave Johnson to James K. Polk, Washington, 22 January 1843, Polk Papers, L. C.; Robert McClellan to Van Buren, Washington, 3 February 1843; J. Bragg to Van Buren, Mobile, 7 May 1843; and Henry D. Gilpin to Van Buren, Philadelphia, 15 June 1843; all in Van Buren Papers, L. C.

For examples of the effort of the Van Buren men to connect the Magician with the Democratic platform, see: Resolutions of the New Hampshire Democractic legislative caucus, Washington Globe, 17 November 1842, and the following letters to William H. Boyce et al., Committee of Invitation for a meeting to nominate Van Buren in Philadelphia on 7 January 1843, which letters were printed in the Washington Globe, 12 January 1843: Andrew Jackson, the Hermitage, [near Nashville, Tenn.], 26 December 1842; Thomas Hart Benton, Washington, 4 January 1843; Silas Wright, Washington, 2 January 1843; and the following letters to Boyce, et al., in the Globe of 13 January 1843: Thomas W. Dorr, Concord, N. H., 2 January 1843; Bedford Brown, Raleigh, N. C., 2 January 1843; and D. Petrikin, Danville, [Pa.], 23 December 1842.

The effectiveness of the tactic of the Van Buren men was demonstrated by the reply of Senator Levi Woodbury of New Hampshire, who had been a member of Van Buren's Cabinet but who, as a Northerner who wanted to be Vice President, preferred a Southerner for first place on the ticket. Woodbury, in regrettfully declining this invitation to a pro-Van Buren meeting, adroitly avoided using the Magician's name in his reply; but he could not omit an endorsement of "the principles of the last administration." Woodbury to Boyce, et al., Washington, 20 December 1843, Washington Globe, 13 January 1843.

See also: Silas Wright to James Wishart et al., Washington, 19 December 1842, ibid., 25 January 1843; and the Address of the Democratic Hickory Club of Philadelphia, 2 May 1843, ibid., 8 May 1843.

13. Niles Register, 63:256 and 272, 17 and 24 December 1842; Cave Johnson to James K. Polk, Washington, 18 December 1842, Polk Papers, L. C.; Bedford Brown to Van Buren, 31 December 1842; Richard D. Spaight to Van Buren, 16 February 1843; and Nathaniel O. Palmer to Van Buren, 29 July 1844; all three in: McPherson, ed., "Letters from North Carolinians to Van Buren," N. C. H. R., 15:141, 142, 146-147; Hamilton, "Party Politics in N. C.," Sprunt Histl. Pubns., 15:86-87.

14. Thomas Hart Benton to Van Buren, Washington, 22 December 1842; Bedford Brown to Van Buren, Raleigh, N. C., 25 December 1842; and J. Bragg to Van Buren, Mobile, 28 October 1842; all in Van Buren Papers, L. C. Cave Johnson to James K. Polk, Washington, 4 January 1843, Polk Papers, L. C.

15. Report of nomination of Calhoun by the South Carolina Legislature, Washington Globe, 28 December 1842; Address and Resolutions of the sixth South Carolina congressional district Democratic convention, reprinted from Charleston Mercury, ibid., 18 March 1843; Address and Resolutions of South Carolina Democratic state convention, 22 May 1843, reprinted from Southern Patriot, ibid., 30 May 1843.

Dixon H. Lewis to Richard K. Crallé, [Washington], 5 April 1842, and Lynchburg, [Va.], 28 December 1842, and Washington, 8 February 1843, and Lynchburg, 10 February [1843], all in: Moore, ed., "Green-Lewis-Crallé Letters," Pubns. of S. H. A., 7:356-357 and 360-361; Calhoun to R. M. T. Hunter, Ft. Hill, [near Pendleton, S. C.], 26 October 1842; and Calhoun to T. G. Clemson, Washington, 6 February 1843; both in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 516-517 and 524-525; D. H. Lewis to Calhoun, Loundesboro, Ala., 2 November 1842, in: Boucher and Brooks, eds., Corr. Addressed to Calhoun, 179-181; Joseph Scoville to R. M. T. Hunter, New York, 21 November and 11 December 1842, in: Charles H. Ambler, ed., Correspondence of Robert M. T. Hunter, 1826-1876 (Vol. 2 of A. H. A. Annual Report, 1916, Washington, 1918), 51-56; D. H. Lewis to Lewis S. Coryell, [Washington], 25 February 1843, Lewis S. Coryell Correspondence, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia; Aaron V. Brown to James K. Polk, Washington, 27 December 1842, Polk Papers, L. C.

16. [Robert Barnwell Rhett], "An Appeal to the Democratic Party, on the Principles of a National Convention . . .," reprinted from the Charleston Mercury in Niles Register, 63:358-360, 4 February 1843.

17. Amos Kendall to Van Buren, Washington, 3 January 1843; Gouverneur Kemble to John Van Buren, Cold Springs, [N.Y.], 26 January 1843; Wright to Van Buren, Washington, 27 January and 27 February 1843; Robert McClellan to Van Buren, Washington, 3 February 1843; J. Bragg to Van Buren, Mobile, 7 May and 28 October 1843; Gideon Welles to Van Buren, Hartford, Conn., 13 June 1843; John Davis to Van Buren, Davisville, [Pa.], 6 July 1843; A. G. Jewett to Henry Simpson et al., Bangor, Me., 23 September 1843; all in: Van Buren Papers, L. C.

Aaron V. Brown to James K. Polk, Washington, 6 January 1843; Williamson Smith to Polk, Washington, 10 January 1843; Cave Johnson to Polk, Washington, 22 and 29 January and 17 February 1843; Archibald Yell to Polk, Little Rock, Ark., 5 and 31 October 1843; all in: Polk Papers, L. C.

(continued)

**17, continued:**

In the second of his two letters to Polk cited above, the indignant Archibald Yell committed what it probably one of the few constitutional puns in American history. Referring to the probability that Calhoun would bolt the party, Yell said: "I wish to God that it was unconstitutional for a man to quit his party--I mean among the politicians--and that they had to suffer under the '2d section.'" Yell apparently referred to Section 2 of Article IV of the Constitution of the United States, which requires that persons fleeing from labor or service to which they are bound by law "be delivered up on the demand of the party to which such service or labor may be due."

18. F. P. Blair warned Van Buren, in a letter from Washington, 17 January 1843, Van Buren Papers, L. C., that "It is the interest of some of those who look beyond the next term in the Presidency . . . to drive . . . Calhoun out of the Democratic ranks betimes." He almost certainly referred to Senator Benton, of whom Silas Wright later complained that "he had long seemed to me to have made up his mind that the party is strong enough with you /Van Buren/, and you strong enough with it to afford to let him make the present canvass the occasion for driving from the communion and killing off C/alhoun/ especially, and if the consequence of that movement should be to lead our Pa. friend /Buchanan/ to the same fate, that he would not shed tears about it. To talk to him, therefore, of conciliation toward S. C. is to urge him to a result which he is not eager to see." Wright to Van Buren, Canton, N. Y., 30 May 1843, ibid.

Congressman Cave Johnson of Tennessee--who was James K. Polk's ambassador to the Van Buren men but who often acted like Van Buren's ambassador to Polk--favored driving Calhoun out of the party at once because he was sure to go sooner or later and the sooner he did so, the easier it would be to refute the charges on which he would base his secession and to recruit his followers away from him. Johnson to Polk, Washington, 29 January and 28 February 1843, Polk Papers, L. C.

19. George Bancroft to Van Buren, Boston, 12 January 1843; Wright to Van Buren, 19 and 27 February 1843; H. D. Gilpin to Van Buren, Philadelphia, 6 and 21 April and 5 May 1843; D. R. Floyd Jones to Van Buren, New York, 8 May 1843; all in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.; and Wright to Wm. H. Roane, Washington, 25 February 1843, New York Historical Society, N. Y. City; and Cave Johnson to Polk, Washington, 5 and 17 February 1843, Polk Papers, L. C.

On Blair's views, see: Washington Globe, 30 January 1843; and Robert McClellan to Van Buren, Washington, 3 February 1843, Van Buren Papers, L. C. The article in the Globe proposing the congressional caucus was not an editorial but an anonymous communication; but Blair's friends knew at the time that Blair agreed

(continued)

19, continued:

with it, and he later said as much. Globe, 20 February 1843.

20. This account of Senator Wright's views about and role in trying to settle the disputes about the national convention is based primarily on his letters to Van Buren from Washington, 19 and 27 February 1843, in the second of which he described his conference with Senator Walker, and from Canton, N. Y., 10 April 1843, all in the Van Buren Papers, L. C., and on Wright's letter to Wm. H. Roane, Washington, 25 February 1843, New York Historical Society.

21. Washington Globe, 25 February 1843; D. H. Lewis to Lewis S. Coryell, [Washington], 25 February 1843, Coryell Corr., Hist. Soc. Pa.

22. Wright's account,(in his letter to Van Buren, Washington, 27 February 1843, Van Buren Papers, L. C.), of his meeting and arrangement with Robert J. Walker has been misunderstood by several authors. James C. N. Paul, whose Rift in the Democracy (Philadelphia, 1951), partakes of the bias of Thomas Hart Benton's Thirty Years' View, asserts that Walker tricked Wright into agreeing to the postponement of the national convention, and that Walker's purpose was to gain time during which to raise the issue of the annexation of Texas. Paul, op. cit., 64 and 65. James P. Shenton, in his biography of Walker, has the wily Mississippian persuade Wright against his will and better judgment: " . . . the two men agreed that . . . a delay would help mollify the various dissidents within the party. Grudgingly, Wright agreed to have the convention . . . in May of 1844." Shenton also mis-states Wright's purpose in proposing the Circular Letter, and even its proposed contents: "He [Wright] asked Walker and . . . Tappan . . . to canvass Democratic congressmen on the acceptability of a May convention." Shenton, Walker, 37. Shenton further states that Walker's motive in tricking Wright was Walker's opposition to Van Buren which, in turn, was based on Van Buren's opposition to the annexation of Texas. Ibid., 36. Even John Arthur Garraty, Wright's biographer, tells an incomplete and partly inaccurate story. Garraty says that Wright still wanted an early convention "but he now considered it useless to try to accomplish this by outsmarting the groups opposed to Van Buren." Garraty, Wright, 241.

Significantly, not one of these authors refers, in connection with the Wright-Walker conference, to the disputes over the manner of selecting delegates to the national convention and over how they were to vote. These were far more fundamental issues than the time of the convention, for the adoption of Calhoun's proposals on these subjects would have revolutionized the whole nominating process; yet they have been generally ignored by the historians of the election of 1844--possibly because they were not adopted.

(continued)

22, continued:

When Wright met Walker, however, he did not know that the district system and per capita vote--as Calhoun called his brain children--were going to be so unimportant that historians would neglect them. He saw in these proposals a grave danger to the existence of the party, which he mentioned, and probably also a grave danger to Van Buren, which he kept to himself. He also saw in them challenges which could be safely met in the state conventions but not in an assembly which represented and decided for the whole party all at once. The key to his strategy was to couple an implied (but not necessarily an actual) concession on the time of the convention with a certain defeat of the district system and per capita vote. He believed that a congressional caucus would certainly postpone the national convention, and he still hoped that the state conventions, or enough of them, would insist on having it early. If a caucus made the decision, he would lose. So he blocked the caucus and gave himself and Van Buren a chance to win on all three questions. Even if the caucus had met, Wright would still have got his way on the last two questions. And no matter how the affair turned out, the Calhoun men would be unlikely to bolt the party over it.

But these authors are guilty of more than overlooking the importance of the controversies over the district system and per capita vote. They also ignore Wright's explicit assertion that he distrusted Walker's motives when the conference began, but became convinced of Walker's sincerity after much talk. Wright was not one to bestow trust easily. He said, of a Congress that included Thomas Hart Benton, numerous Democratic Congressmen from New York, and other old friends, and of a city in which Frank Blair resided, that there was not a man he could consult with "in our manner"--that is, as he and Van Buren consulted, in complete confidence. Paul and Shenton also ignore Wright's clear statement that the idea of the Circular Letter was his, not Walker's.

Paul and Shenton both assume, and without a shred of evidence to my knowledge, that: Walker was already, in February, 1843, determined to make annexation an issue in the election of 1844; Walker knew that Van Buren opposed annexation; Walker had reason to believe that annexation could be made an issue, but not settled, by May, 1844, but not by November, 1843. One might add, both assume, contrary to the fact, that Van Buren was ever publicly unconditionally opposed to the annexation of Texas. (See Chapter VII below.)

The matter would be trivial but for its connection with the myth of an anti-Van Buren, or pro-Texas, or anti-Union, or pro-slavery plot. Walker did emerge as one of the principal advocates of annexation; the issue was raised but not settled by May, 1844; Van Buren did make a public statement on the subject which was interpreted as opposing annexation and did contribute to his defeat

(continued)

22, continued:

at the national convention. Ergo, there was a plot against Van Buren. It has been suggested that history would be more intelligible if written backwards from the present; perhaps the experiment would be worth a try, but he who attempts it ought not to reverse the usual order of cause and effect as well, and attempt to explain what happened in 1843 as resulting from what happened in 1844.

The story of the postponement of the Democratic national convention to May, 1844, is also incorrectly told in: Oscar Doane Lambert, Presidential Politics in the United States, 1841-1844 (Durham, N. C., 1936), a work which is in error on so many points and so poorly annotated that it ought not to be trusted, especially on a matter of detail.

23. Report of Democratic meeting at Buckingham Courthouse, Va., 10 October 1842, reprinted from the Richmond Enquirer, 21 October 1842, in Niles Register, 63:158-159, 5 November 1842; R. B. Gooch to Auguste Davezac, Washington, December 1842, Van Buren Papers, L. C.; Calhoun to R. M. T. Hunter, Ft. Hill, 26 October 1842; F. H. Elmore to Calhoun, Charleston, 2 November 1842; and F. W. Pickens to Calhoun, Edgewood, [S.C.], 8 November 1842; all three in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 517, 858, and 864; Ambler, "Virginia and the Presidential Succession," Turner Essays, 176-180; and Ambler, Ritchie, 229-230.

24. H. L. Hopkins et al. to Van Buren, and to [Thomas Hart Benton], both from Washington, 17 February 1843; R. W. Wallace to Van Buren, Warrenton, Va., 18 February 1843; all in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.

In the Van Buren Papers there is a draft of a reply by Van Buren to Hopkins et al., dated Albany, 24 February 1843, in which the Magician stated his disapproval of the Tariff of 1842. In Wallace to Van Buren, Warrenton, Va., 2 March 1844, ibid., there is a reference to a similar reply by Van Buren, apparently to Wallace. Both Hopkins and Wallace had quizzed Van Buren about the tariff, but Wallace asked only one question while Hopkins asked four. Either Van Buren sent Wallace a virtual duplicate of his reply to Hopkins or, what seems more accurate, he answered only Wallace, using the reply he had drafted for Hopkins as a model. When a letter by Van Buren on the tariff, written during February, 1843, finally appeared in print, in the latter part of that year, it was represented as having been addressed to Thomas Ritchie! See Wallace to Van Buren, 2 March 1844, ibid.

25. John Letcher to [Thomas Hart Benton], Lexington, Va., 15 December 1842, enclosed in Benton to Van Buren, Washington, 22 December 1842, but filed under its own date; Wm. H. Roane to Wright, Richmond, 9 and 14 February 1843; and W. Selden to Van Buren, Washington, 5 March 1843; all in the Van Buren Papers, L.C.

(continued)

25, continued:

Editorial on Calhoun's candidacy, Richmond Enquirer, 12 August 1842, reprinted in: "Ritchie Letters," Branch Histl. Papers, 3:271-275; Ritchie to Calhoun, Richmond, 24 November 1841, in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 840.

26. J. R. Poinsett to Van Buren, Greenville, S. C., 7 October 1842; John Letcher to /Benton/, Lexington, Va., 15 December 1842; Robert McClellan to Van Buren, /Washington/, 20 February 1843; all in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.; Ambler, "Virginia and the Presidential Succession," Turner Essays, 174-175 and 182-183.

27. Calhoun to James H. Hammond, Washington, 23 January 1843; to James Edward Calhoun, Washington, 28 February 1843; to Duff Green, Ft. Hill, /March/, 1843; to Henry St. George Tucker, Ft. Hill, 31 March 1843; to R. M. T. Hunter, Ft. Hill, 2 April /1843/; to James Edward Calhoun, Ft. Hill, 8 April 1843; and to Hunter, /Ft. Hill, May? 1843/, fragment, and Ft. Hill, 3 June 1843; all in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 523, 525-531, and 532-536.

28. This account of the preparation of Van Buren's reply to the Indiana convention is based on: John Law to Van Buren, Indianapolis, 10 January 1843; Ethan A. Brown, chairman, et al. to Van Buren, Indianapolis, 10 January 1843; Wright to Van Buren, Washington, 27 January and 19 February 1843; Wright to A. C. Flagg, /Washington/, 25 February 1843; Ethan A. Brown to Van Buren, Rising Sun, Ind., 28 February 1843; A. Ten Eyck to Van Buren, Detroit, Mich., 30 March 1843; Brown to Van Buren, Rising Sun, Ind., 4 April 1843; Wright to Van Buren, Canton, N. Y., 10 April 1843; Law to Van Buren, Vincennes, Ind., 17 April 1843; Nathaniel West to Van Buren, Indianapolis, 25 April 1843; and Martin Van Buren, Mr. Van Buren's Reply to the Democratic State Convention of Indiana, Kinderbook, N. Y., February 15, 1843 /sic/; all in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.

29. Ibid., 6-9.

30. Calhoun to R. M. T. Hunter, /Ft. Hill, May? 1843/, fragment, in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 533-534.

John Law to Van Buren, Vincennes, Ind., 17 April 1843; Wm. Parry to Van Buren, Cincinnati, 12 June 1843; Moses Dawson to Van Buren, Cincinnati, 28 July 1843; Samuel Denoon, Richmond, Va., 14 June 1843; P. V. Daniel to Van Buren, Richmond, 6 July 1843, and Jackson, Miss., 15 November 1843; R. J. Walker to Van Buren, Natchez, Miss., 4 August 1843; and Lloyd Selby to Van Buren, Warrenton, Miss. 6 April 1844; all in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.

In June, 1844, Reuben Chapman, an Alabama Congressman, observed that Van Buren's views on the tariff "as expressed . . . in his

(continued)

30, continued:

Indiana Letter, are the safest, if not the best," and urged presidential candidate James K. Polk to echo them. Chapman to Polk, Washington, 5 June 1844, Polk Papers, L. C.

31. Wright to Flagg, [Washington], 25 February 1843; and to Van Buren, Canton, N. Y., 10 April 1843; both in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.; Van Buren to George Bancroft, 19 March 1843, in: "Van Buren-Bancroft Corr.," Mass. Hist. Soc. Proc., 42:399-400; Hammond, History of Political Parties in New York, 3:349; Garraty, Wright, 291.

32. Flagg to Van Buren, Albany, 12 April 1843, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

33. Hammond, History of Political Parties in New York, 2:485, 526-527, and 3:247-290, 307-314; Garraty, Wright, 174-175, 186-188, and 228-231.

Wright to Flagg, Washington, 21 June 1838, 21 February 1840, and 10 March 1840; Heman J. Redfield to Flagg, Batavia, [N.Y.], 19 November 1841; Flagg to [Redfield], [Albany], 22 November 1841, draft, partly in shorthand; Michael Hoffman to Flagg, Herkimer, N. Y., 30 June 1842; John A. Dix to Flagg, Utica, N. Y., 31 July 1842; all in the Flagg Papers, N. Y. Pub. Lib.

John Hunter to Van Buren, [Albany], 4 February 1842; and Wright to Van Buren, Washington, 2 August 1842; both in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.; Wright to John Fine, Washington, 30 July 1842, printed in: Hammond, History of Political Parties in New York, 3:307-308.

34. Ibid., 315-319, 325-326, and 338-364; memorandum entitled "Fiscal," [a draft of a portion of a message to the legislature, in Van Buren's hand, and probably prepared for Governor Bouck; it is probably referred to in Wm. L. Marcy to Van Buren, Albany, 10 December 1842], filed 7 December 1842; G. Kemble to John Van Buren, Cold Springs, [N. Y.], 26 January 1843; William L. Marcy to Van Buren, Albany, 27 January 1843; Wright to Van Buren, Washington, 27 January and 19 February 1843; Edwin Croswell to Van Buren, Albany, 4 February 1843; and H. D. Gilpin to Van Buren, Philadelphia, 14 February 1843; all in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.

Flagg to Samuel J. Tilden, Albany, 23 January 1843, S. J. Tilden Papers, N. Y. Pub. Lib.; Lorenzo Sherwood to Wm. C. Bryant, Albany, 30 January 1843; and H. H. Van Dyck to Bryant, Albany, 13 February 1843; both in the Bryant-Godwin Coll., New York Public Library, N. Y. City.

35. Wright to Van Buren, Canton, N. Y., 10 April 1843; and Flagg to Van Buren, Albany, 12 April 1843; both in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.; Van Buren to Flagg, Lindenwald, [near Kinderhook, N. Y.], 10 April 1843, Flagg Papers, Col. Univ. Lib.

36. Flagg to Van Buren, Albany, 12 and 15 April 1843; H. D. Gilpin to Van Buren, Philadelphia, 21 April 1843; and Samuel Medary to Van Buren, Columbus, O., 27 April 1843; all in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.; Washington Globe, 20 and 24 April 1843.

## Notes to Chapter V

1. Gilpin to Van Buren, Philadelphia, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

2. Wm. Lee D. Ewing to James K. Polk, [Springfield, Ill.], 24 February 1843, Polk Papers, L. C.; Sidney Breese to Van Buren, Clinton Co., Ill., 21 March 1843, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

John Law to Van Buren, Vincennes, Ind., 4 November 1842, Indianapolis, 10 January 1843, and Vincennes, 17 and 29 April 1843 and 22 September 1843, all ibid.; Roger H. Van Bolt, "Sectional Aspects of Expansion, 1844-1848," Indiana Magazine of History, 48(1952):119-120 and 126.

3. Holt, Party Politics in Ohio, 19-22, 65-68, 94-97, and 101-111; Samuel Medary to Flagg, Columbus, O., 29 December 1840, Flagg Papers, N. Y. Pub. Lib.; John Hastings to Van Buren, Salem, O., 1 November 1842; Moses Dawson to Van Buren, Cincinatti, 15 November 1842 and 16 May and 2 August 1843; Medary to Van Buren, Columbus, 16 November 1842 and 27 April 1843; and John S. Bagg to Wright, Columbus, 20 February 1843; all in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.

J. M. Henry to James K. Polk, Oxford, Miss., 3 March and 19 April 1843, Polk Papers, L. C.; Thos. J. Pew to Van Buren, Jackson, Miss., 14 May 1843; and Robert J. Walker to Van Buren, near Natchez, Miss., 4 August 1843; both in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.

Report of the Maryland Democratic caucus, Washington Globe, 25 February 1843; Dixon H. Lewis to Lewis S. Coryell, [Washington], 25 February 1843, Coryell Corr., Hist. Soc. Pa.

4. Proceedings and resolutions of Massachusetts Democratic caucus, reprinted from Boston Post in the Washington Globe, 13 March 1843; George Bancroft to Van Buren, Boston, 10 May 1843, Van Buren Papers, L. C., and printed in: "Van Buren-Bancroft Corr.," Mass. Hist. Soc. Proc., 42:402-404.

Perry Smith to Van Buren, New Milford, Conn., 22 May 1843, Van Buren Papers, L. C.; Washington Globe, 30 May 1843.

5. Henry D. Gilpin to Van Buren, Philadelphia, 14 December 1842; William Allen to Van Buren, [Washington], 18 January 1843; Edmund Burke to Robert McClellan, Newport, N. H., 28 April 1843; Wright to Van Buren, Canton, N. Y., 19 June 1843; Wm. H. Roane to Van Buren, Richmond, Va., 11 September 1843; George Bancroft to Van Buren, Boston, 23 November 1842 and 23 May and 6, 12, and 22 June 1843; all in the Van Buren Papers, L. C. See also: Henry D. Gilpin to J. R. Poinsett, Philadelphia, 15 June 1843, Poinsett Section, Gilpin Papers, Hist. Soc. Pa.; Levi Woodbury to Samuel Treat, Portsmouth, N. H., 12 May 1843, Judge Samuel Treat Papers, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis, Mo.; and R. M. T. Hunter to Calhoun, Essex Co., Va., 23 May 1843 and 16 June [1843], the

(continued)

5, continued:

first in: Boucher and Brooks, eds., Corr. Addressed to Calhoun, 184-186, and the second in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 865.

Proceedings and resolutions of the New Hampshire Democratic state convention, Washington Globe, 15 June 1843.

6. Proceedings of the Pennsylvania Democratic caucus, ibid., 24 April 1843; James Buchanan to J. M. Foltz, Lancaster, Pa., 21 April 1843, a typed copy, Letters and Drafts, Buchanan Papers, Hist. Soc. Pa.; H. D. Gilpin to Van Buren, Philadelphia, 16 and 21 April and 5 May 1843, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

George Bancroft to Van Buren, Boston, 12 January and 10 and 23 May 1843, ibid.

See also: D. R. Floyd Jones to Van Buren, New York, 8 May 1843; Samuel Starkweather to Van Buren, Cleveland, 30 May 1843; and John Law to Van Buren, Indianapolis, 1 June 1843; all ibid.

7. Wright to Van Buren, Canton, N. Y., 30 May 1843, ibid.

8. Wright to Van Buren, Canton, N. Y., 19 June 1843, ibid.; editorial from the Richmond Enquirer, reprinted in the Washington Globe, 17 June 1843.

Before the meeting of the New Hampshire convention, the Indiana Democratic State Central Committee issued a circular letter proposing that, in those states where the party had not already acted on the question, state conventions or caucuses should decide whether they preferred an early or a late national convention and report their decisions to the Washington Globe or Richmond Enquirer, which would publish them, and that the party be bound by a decision of a majority of the states. John Lester et al., Committee, Circular, n.p., n.d., in: Washington Globe, 13 June 1843; and John Law to Van Buren, Vincennes, 15 July 1843, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

By 1 June 1843 at least nine states had announced in favor of a late convention, three more did so during the month of June, and several states had scheduled their state conventions for the choice of national convention delegates to meet after November, 1843, when the Van Buren men wanted to hold the national convention. Only five states--Indiana, Tennessee, Missouri, Virginia, and New York--had called for an early convention.

The action of the New Hampshire convention, coupled with the editorial exchange between the Enquirer and the Mercury, settled the matter, except for a difference of opinion about whether the convention should meet on the first, second, or fourth Monday in May, 1844, which was finally resolved in favor of the last date.

(continued)

8, continued:

See: Cave Johnson to James K. Polk, Washington, 10 February 1844, Polk Papers, L. C. Johnson's letter, which refers to Ritchie's insistence on the latest date in May, while "we"--by which Johnson ordinarily meant the Van Buren men--wanted one of the earlier Mondays in May as the time of meeting, is the only reference I have seen to this last episode in the long controversy over the time of the national convention of 1844. To those convinced that there was a plot to delay the national convention until the issue of annexation of Texas had been raised, this would appear to be a worthwhile subject of investigation, for by February, 1844, the Treaty of Annexation was nearly complete, as Ritchie probably knew. However, it is more probable that Ritchie objected to having the convention early in the month of May because the Virginia legislative elections were to be held then.

For evidence of the general acceptance of the postponement of the national convention after the action of the New Hampshire state convention, see: reports of editorial opinions expressed by the Lexington, Ky., Gazette and the New York, New York, Plebeian in the Washington Globe, 24 June 1843; John Law to Van Buren, Vincennes, Ind., 15 July 1843; James K. Polk to Van Buren, Columbia, Tenn., 18 August 1843; and John Danforth to Van Buren, New London, Conn., 24 August 1843; all in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.

9. On the Indiana arrangement, see: John Law to Van Buren, Indianapolis, 10 January 1843, and Vincennes, Ind., 29 April, 15 July, and 22 September 1843, ibid.

The Illinois state convention left the choice of delegates from congressional districts to the congressional district conventions, rather than to the people. Wm. Lee D. Ewing to Polk, [Springfield, Ill.], 24 February 1843, Polk Papers, L. C.

The Virginia convention authorized each congressional district convention to select four delegates who, along with the two delegates-at-large, were to cast the state's seventeen votes as a unit. Virginia Democratic Address, Washington Globe, 27 March 1843.

The Louisiana legislative caucus authorized each delegate to vote individually but directed that the state convention should choose the entire delegation. Report of Louisiana Democratic caucus, ibid., 18 April 1843; Henry D. Gilpin to Van Buren, Philadelphia, 16 April 1843; Thos. J. Pew to Van Buren, Jackson, Miss., 14 May 1843; and Alexander Walker to Van Buren, New Orleans, 6 August 1843; all in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.

In Tennessee it was proposed, as a way of satisfying the Calhoun men without making any genuine sacrifice, to have the delegates to the state convention from each congressional district choose the national convention delegate from their district. J. G. M. Ramsey

(continued)

9, continued:

to Polk, Mecklenberg, /near Knoxville, Tenn./, 12 October 1843, Polk Papers, L. C.

George Bancroft expressed the feeling of most state party leaders on the subject when he said, of the district system and per capita vote, that "These two points ought not to be yielded in any essential variation." Bancroft to Van Buren, Boston, 10 May 1843, Van Buren Papers, L. C., also printed in: "Van Buren-Bancroft Corr.," Mass. Hist. Soc. Proc., 42:402-403.

10. Calhoun to R. M. T. Hunter, Ft. Hill, 3 June 1843; and Edward Black to Calhoun, Barnwell District, S. C., 1 September 1843; both in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 535 and 868-869; report of Georgia convention, reprinted from the Georgia Constitutionalist by the Washington Globe, 12 and 14 June 1843; Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, Georgia and State Rights; A Study of the Political History of Georgia from the Revolution to the Civil War, with Particular Regard to Federal Relations (Vol. 2 of American Historical Association Annual Report, 1901, Washington, 1902), 146-148.

11. Address of the South Carolina Democratic state convention, reprinted from the Southern Patriot by the Washington Globe, 30 May 1843; editorial reply to the Richmond Enquirer by the Charleston Mercury, reprinted ibid., 14 June 1843.

12. Calhoun to R. M. T. Hunter, Ft. Hill, 12 September 1843; and to George McDuffie, Ft. Hill, 4 December 1843; both in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 548-549 and 552-555.

13. James A. Seddon to Hunter, Richmond, 1 April 1843, in: Charles H. Ambler, ed., Correspondence of Robert M. T. Hunter, 1826-1876 (Vol. 2 of American Historical Association Annual Report, 1916, Washington, 1918), 63-64; Hunter to Calhoun, Essex Co., Va., 23 May 1843, in: Boucher and Brooks, eds., Corr. Addressed to Calhoun, 184-186; Calhoun to Hunter, Ft. Hill, 2 April /1843/; and Hunter to Calhoun, Essex Co., Va., 16 June /1843/; both in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 528-530 and 865-866; Calhoun to Thomas W. Gilmer, Ft. Hill, 28 July 1843, in: "Original Letters," William and Mary Qrtrly., 20:8-10; Ambler, "Virginia and the Presidential Succession," Turner Essays, 186.

14. R. M. T. Hunter to Calhoun, /Essex Co., Va./, 19 September 1843, in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 882.

15. Ambler, Ritchie, 230-231; Peter V. Daniel to Van Buren, Richmond, 6 July 1843; Wm H. Roane to Van Buren, Richmond, 11 September and 17 October 1843; and Andrew Stevenson to Van Buren, The Retreat, /near Richmond?/, 8 October 1843; all in: Van Buren Papers, L. C.

16. R. Wallace to Van Buren, Warrenton, Va., 2 March 1844, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

On the use of his Virginia letter against Van Buren, see: George W. Nead to Van Buren, Syracuse, N. Y., 13 April 1844; J. Pollock, S. Wilson, et al. to Van Buren, New Castle, Pa., 4 May 1844; and Samuel Workman to Van Buren, Washington, Pa., 12 April 1844; all ibid.

17. David T. Disney et al., Circular, Cincinatti, 22 May 1843; and Moses Dawson to Van Buren, Cincinatti, 2 August 1843; both in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.

18. Van Buren to A. H. Tracy, K[inderh]ook], 13 December 1841, Tracy Papers, N. Y. St. Lib.; Van Buren to Jackson, Kinderhook, 7 February 1842; Van Buren to A. C. Paige, New York City, 21 February 1842; Samuel Snowden et al. to Van Buren, Pittsburgh, Pa., 8 March 1842; John Slidell to Van Buren, New Orleans, 10 March 1842; Van Buren to Jackson, High Hills of Santee, [Sumter Dist., S. C.], 26 March 1842; Thomas Hart Benton to Van Buren, Washington, 14 April and 3 and 8 June 1842; clipping from Natchez, Miss., Free Trader, 19 April 1842; Van Buren to Jackson, Kinderhook, 30 July 1842; C. J. Ingersoll to Van Buren, Washington, 31 July 1842; and Wright to Van Buren, Washington, 2 August 1842; all in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.; and James H. Hammond to Calhoun, Silver Bluff, [S. C.], 10 September 1842, in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 849.

The Washington Globe reported, from time to time, on Van Buren's progress and the receptions he received. March-July 1842, passim.

See also: Sellers, Polk: Jacksonian, 466-467.

19. Jackson to Van Buren, the Hermitage, 16 August 1841, Van Buren Papers, L. C.; J. George Harris to Polk, Nashville, 20 December 1842, Polk Papers, L. C.; Sellers, Polk: Jacksonian, 292-297, 352-375, 419-426, 436-444, and 460-487.

20. Ibid., 488; Van Buren to F. P. Blair, 5 September 1843, Van Buren Letters, Gist-Blair Papers, L. C., quoted ibid., 490.

Polk attributed his defeat to embarrassing state and local issues. Polk to Van Buren, Columbia, Tenn., 18 August 1843, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

On the Cass movement in Tennessee, see: David Craighead to Polk, Nashville, 5 October 1843; Wm. M. Lowry to Polk, Greenville, Tenn., 21 October 1843; and Cave Johnson to Polk, Clarksville, Tenn., 10 November 1843; all in the Polk Papers, L. C.; and Andrew Johnson to Robert Reynolds, Greenville, Tenn., 9 September 1843, New York Historical Society; J. Bragg to Van Buren, Mobile,

(continued)

20, continued:

Ala., 28 October 1843; and Cave Johnson to Van Buren, Clarksville, Tenn., 9 October 1843; both in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.

The quotation is from an editorial in the Knoxville, Tenn., Argus, reprinted in the Washington Globe, 28 September 1843, and also in the Kentucky Yeoman, undated clipping in the Van Buren Papers, L. C., filed September 1843.

21. George W. Rice to Polk, Battle Creek, Tenn., 22 September 1843; and J. W. Blackwell to Polk, Athens, Tenn., 5 October 1843; both in the Polk Papers, L. C.

Polk to Wright, Columbia, Tenn., 9 February 1844, draft copy, ibid.; Cave Johnson to Van Buren, Washington, 20 April 1844, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

22. Levin H. Coe to Polk, Jackson, Tenn., 10 October 1843; and J. G. M. Ramsey to Polk, Mecklenburg, 12 October 1843; both in the Polk Papers, L. C.

23. Cave Johnson to Polk, Clarksville, Tenn., 10 November 1843, and Washington, 9 December 1843; both ibid.

Ramsey to Polk, /Knoxville?/, 12 October 1843; S. H. Laughlin to Polk, Nashville, 20 October 1843; and Wm. H. Polk to Polk, Nashville, 16 November 1843; all ibid.

24. Wm. H. Polk to Polk, Nashville, 16 November 1843, and S. H. Laughlin to Polk, Nashville, 17 November 1843, both ibid., reported the revival of the Cass movement in Nashville on the eve of the state convention.

The following letters to Van Buren, all in the Van Buren Papers, L. C., explained and justified the failure of the state convention to nominate Van Buren, falsely asserting that the Cass movement had begun just before the state meeting, falsely implying that the decision not to nominate Van Buren and the decision not to nominate Polk had been made simultaneously and at a time when Polk was out of the state, and saying nothing about the difficulty with the address of the convention: Andrew Jackson, the Hermitage, 29 November 1843; Polk, Columbia, Tenn., 30 November 1843; and L. P. Cheatham, Nashville, 22 December 1843. Jackson, of course, was simply repeating what he had been told.

On the address, see: S. H. Laughlin to Polk, 18 and 19 December 1843; and R. Armstrong to Polk, /Nashville/, 31 December 1843; all in the Polk Papers, L. C.

25. Polk to Wright, Columbia, Tenn., 9 February 1844, draft copy, ibid.; Polk to Van Buren, Columbia, Tenn., 30 November 1843; and Cave Johnson to Van Buren, Wash., 20 April 1844; both in Van Buren Papers, L. C.

26. John Fairfield to Van Buren, Saco, Me., 15 October 1842; and Augusta, Me., 28 January, 3 March, and 19 August 1843; Hugh J. Anderson to Van Buren, Belfast, Me., 4 February and 23 June 1843; and Bangor, Me., 6 August 1843; George Bancroft to Van Buren, Boston, 22 June 1843; F. Temple Wheeler to Van Buren, Bangor, Me., 26 June 1843; and Albert G. Jewett to Wm. L. Marcy, Bangor, Me., 28 June 1843; all in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.; Hatch, ed., Maine, 2:314-319.

27. On Nile's illness, see: Gideon Welles to [Van Buren], Hartford, Conn., 29 April and 13 June 1843, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

On the Connecticut convention, see: Welles to Van Buren, Hartford, 13 June and 26 October 1843; Wm. L. Marcy to Van Buren, Albany, 30 July 1843; and John Danforth to Van Buren, New London, Conn., 24 August 1843; all ibid.; and Lemuel Williams to Calhoun, Boston, 9 January 1844, in: Boucher and Brooks, eds., Corr. Addressed to Calhoun, 205; and Colin M. Ingersoll to Calhoun, New Haven, 3 April 1844, in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 944.

On the Vermont convention, see: George W. Barker to Van Buren, Montpelier, 18 October 1843, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

28. On the preparations of Van Buren and his close associates, see: Wright to Van Buren, Canton, N. Y., 19 June and 14 July 1843; Wm. L. Marcy to Van Buren, Albany, 2 and 30 July 1843; and Flagg to Van Buren, Albany, 4 September 1843; all ibid.; and Michael Hoffman to Flagg, Herkimer, N. Y., 31 July and 15 September 1843; and Wright to Flagg, Canton, N. Y., 6 August 1843; all in the Flagg Papers, N. Y. Pub. Lib.

On the activities of the Calhoun men in New York City and upstate, see: George Bottles to Joseph A. Scoville, Litchfield, [N. Y.], 7 January 1842; B. S. Hart to R. M. T. Hunter, New York, 9 June 1842; Scoville to Hunter, New York, 29 August 1842; all in: Ambler, ed., Corr. of Hunter, 38-41; and Scoville to Calhoun, New York, 25 October 1842; and Fitzwilliam Byrdsall to Calhoun, New York, 6 November 1842; both in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 855-857 and 861-862; and G. Kemble to J. R. Poinsett, Cold Springs, [N. Y.], 10 November 1842, Poinsett Sect., Gilpin Papers, Hist. Soc. Pa.; and Aaron Vanderpoel to Van Buren, New York, 29 August 1842; Joel Turrill to Van Buren, Oswego, 10 May 1843; and Wm. L. Marcy to Van Buren, Albany, 2 July 1843; all in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.

The efforts of the Cass men in New York City were reported to Van Buren by Thomas N. Carr, whose letters to the Magician from New York, 13 May, 15 July, 14 August, and 15 September 1843, are ibid. The New York City Democratic convention is described in: Nelson J. Waterbury to S. J. Tilden, New York, 30 August 1843, Tilden Papers, N. Y. Pub. Lib.

(continued)

28, continued:

There was also some support for the district system in upstate New York, apart from the Calhoun movement: Marcy to Van Buren, ... Albany, 30 July 1843; and James R. Doolittle to Van Buren, Warsaw, N. Y., 2 October 1843; both in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.

On the state convention, see: Hammond, History of Political Parties in New York, 3:365; and Washington Globe, 11 and 12 September, 1843.

29. Lemuel Williams to Calhoun, Boston, 6 September 1843; S. A. Lawrence to Calhoun, New York, 13 September 1843; R. M. T. Hunter to Calhoun, [Essex Co., Va.], 19 September [1843]; and F. W. Pickens to Calhoun, Charleston, 22 October 1843; all in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 878-879, 880-881, 882, and 890.

J. Francis Hutton to R. M. T. Hunter, New York, 26 September 1843, in: Ambler, ed., Corr. of Hunter, 64-65.

Hunter to Calhoun, [Essex Co., Va.], 10 October 1843, in: Boucher and Brooks, eds., Corr. Addressed to Calhoun, 186-188.

Thomas N. Carr to Van Buren, New York, 15 September 1843; Moses G. Leonard to Van Buren, New York, 15 September 1843; J. B. Booth to Van Buren, Goshen, N. Y., 8 December 1843; and S. A. Lawrence et al., Circular, 6 December 1843; all in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.

Wiltse, Calhoun: Sectionalist, 144-146.

30. Hutton to Hunter, New York, 26 September 1843, in: Ambler, ed., Corr. of Hunter, 64-65; Lawrence, et al., Circular, 6 December 1843, Van Buren Papers, L. C.; and Williams to Calhoun, Boston, 6 September 1843; and Theophilus Fisk to Calhoun, Portsmouth, Va., 29 November 1843; both in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 876 and 895-896.

Calhoun to Hunter, Ft. Hill, 12 September 1843, ibid., 548-549.

31. Henry P. Barbour, one of the leaders of the state rights Democrats in New York City, reported to Calhoun that the circular letter, urging the election of national convention delegates by districts, which he, Lawrence, and others had sent all over the country, had received a very cool reception. "That proscriptive party organization, which, under the cool, calculating, selfish, and most treacherous policy of Mr. Van Buren, has fettered as it were the very souls of political men, is hard--very hard--to break." Barber to Calhoun, New York, 29 December 1843, ibid.; Boucher and Brooks, eds., Corr. Addressed to Calhoun, 195-198. (punctuation supplied.)

32. Rhett to Calhoun, /Washington/, 7 and 16 October 1843; and Pickens to Calhoun, Charleston, 22 October 1843; both in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 885-887, 887-888, and 889-890.

33. Rhett to Buchanan, Washington, 15 September 1843, Misc. Corr., Buchanan Papers, Hist. Soc. Pa.; Pickens to Calhoun, Charleston, 22 October 1843; Rhett to Calhoun, /Washington/, 8 December 1843; and Virgil Maxcy to Calhoun, Washington, 10 December 1843; all in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 889, 898, and 900-901.

34. Wiltse, Calhoun: Nullifier, 405-406; Cave Johnson to Polk, Washington, 18 December 1842, and 4 and 22 January 1843, Polk Papers, L. C.

35. R. M. T. Hunter to Calhoun, /Essex Co., Va./, 19 September 1843, in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 882.

36. Rhett to Buchanan, Washington, 15 September 1843, Misc. Corr., Buchanan Papers, Hist. Soc. Pa.; Buchanan to Rhett, Lancaster, Pa., 25 September 1843, draft copy, Letters and Drafts, ibid.

On Wilkin's role in the plot, see: Rhett to Calhoun, /Washington, 8 December 1843/, in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 898; and John Davis to Van Buren, Davisville, Pa., 14 December 1843, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

On Wilkin's relations with Buchanan in Pennsylvania, see: Klein, Pres. Buchanan, 55, 77, and 96-97.

37. Smith, Blair Family, 1:56-57 and 124-134; see also: above, pages 72-73.

For Democratic criticism of Blair's editorial policies, see: C. J. Ingersoll to Van Buren, Washington, 23 July 1841; Peter V. Daniel to Van Buren, Richmond, 6 July 1843; and W. Selden to Van Buren, Washington, 25 November 1843; all in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.; and Thomas Fitzgerald to Lucius Lyon, St. Joseph, Mich., 27 January, 7 March, and 14 April 1844; and S. M. Johnson to Lyon, Grand Rapids, Mich., 5 February 1844; all in the Lucius Lyon Papers, Clements Library, Ann Arbor, Mich.

38. Schlesinger, Age of Jackson, 67-71 and 392-393; Smith, Blair Family, 1:22-23, 27, 30, 38-48, 52-53, 55, 58-61, 64, 141, and 159-162; Kendall to Van Buren, Washington, 7 December 1842; Wright to Van Buren, Washington, 23 December 1842; Marcy to Van Buren, Albany, 1 December 1843; and a number of letters to Van Buren from Kendall and from Blair, 1842-1843; all in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.

Kendall's criticism of Blair's editorial policy toward Tyler was presented at length in his letters to Van Buren during late 1842 and 1843, ibid.

39. Kendall to Van Buren, Washington, 20 August and 5 November 1843, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

40. Cave Johnson to James K. Polk, Washington, 28 November and 9 December 1843, Polk Papers, L. C.; Wm. L. Marcy to Van Buren, Albany, 1 December 1843, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

41. F. W. Pickens to Calhoun, Charleston, 22 October 1843; Rhett to Calhoun, Washington, 8 December 1843; and Virgil Maxcy to Calhoun, Washington, 10 December 1843; all in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 889-890, 898, and 900-901; Cave Johnson to Polk, Washington, 8 December 1843, Polk Papers, L. C.; and John Davis to Van Buren, Davisville, Pa., 14 December 1843, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

42. Davis to Van Buren, Davisville, Pa., 14 December 1843, ibid.

43. Cave Johnson to Polk, Washington, 9 December 1843, Polk Papers, L. C.; C. J. Ingersoll to Van Buren, Washington, 1 February 1844, Van Buren Papers, L. C.; Rhett to Calhoun, Washington, 10 December 1843, in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 898; Maxcy to Calhoun, Washington, 10 December 1843, ibid., 901.

The Calhoun men had been accustomed to rely on Saunders (see: F. H. Elmore to Calhoun, Charleston, 4 September 1843, ibid., 872-874, and page 77 above) but he had obtained renomination and re-election to Congress only by pledging his support of the presidential nominee of the national convention. See: J. Bragg to Van Buren, Mobile, 28 October 1843, Van Buren Papers, L. C.; Bragg's brother, his source of information, was a Democratic politician in Saunders's district in North Carolina.

44. Rhett to Calhoun, Washington, 8 December 1843; and Virgil Maxcy to Calhoun, Washington, 10 December 1843; both in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 898 and 900-902; Aaron V. Brown to Polk, Washington, 4 and 9 December 1843; and Cave Johnson to Polk, Washington, 9 December 1843; all in the Polk Papers, L. C.

45. Johnson to Polk, Washington, 9 December 1843, ibid.; Wright to Van Buren, Washington, 6 December 1843, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

46. Ibid.; F. P. Blair to Van Buren, Washington, 10 December 1843; and Henry D. Gilpin to Van Buren, Philadelphia, 10 December 1843; both ibid.

47. On Buchanan's troubles in Pennsylvania, see: Klein, Pres. Buchanan, 156-157; Henry A. Muhlenberg to Buchanan, Reading, Pa., 10 and 24 December 1843, Misc. Corr., Buchanan Papers, Hist. Soc. Pa.; and Buchanan's replies, dated Washington, 13 December 1843, and Lancaster, Pa., 29 December 1843, both draft copies, Letters and Drafts, ibid.

(continued)

47, continued:

Buchanan remarked, in his first reply to Muhlenberg, that Van Buren's nomination was certain and thay he must withdraw from the presidential race. Two of his more prominent supporters in Pennsylvania had already advised him to withdraw. Benjamin H. Brewster to Buchanan, Philadelphia, 8 December 1843, Brewster Letters, ibid.; and George Plitt to Buchanan, Philadelphia, 10 December 1843, Misc. Corr., ibid. Buchanan repeated his reasons for withdrawing in a letter to a friend: Buchanan to Mrs. Cornelia Roosevelt, Washington, 13 May 1844, Letters and Drafts, ibid., also printed in: Curtis, Buchanan, 1:518-519.

On Johnson's withdrawl, see: John Wentworth to Van Buren, Washington, 26 December 1843, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

48. Some Democrats expected Calhoun to give up the contest even before the House caucus because his friends had been defeated in the Alabama state convention and because in Georgia, where his friends controlled the party and had committed it to him, the Whigs had won the gubernatorial election early in October. See: Amos Kendall to Van Buren, Washington, 15 November 1843; and J. Bragg to Van Buren, Mobile, 14 December 1843; both ibid.; and Archibald Yell to Polk, Little Rock, Ark., 31 October 1843; and L..H. Coe to Polk, Louisville, [Ky.?], 7 January [1844], misdated 1843; both in the Polk Papers, L. C.

Virgil Maxcy had advised, and Calhoun himself had decided, even before the caucus met, that Calhoun ought not to be a candidate before the Democratic national convention because it had not been reformed, but that Calhoun should run as an independent candidate. F. W. Pickens to Calhoun, Charleston, 22 October 1843; Maxcy to Calhoun, West River, [Md.], 3 December 1843; and Calhoun to George McDuffie, Ft. Hill, 4 December 1843; all in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 889, 896-897, and 552-555, respectively. See also pages 139-143 below.

For evidence of the belief that Calhoun had been withdrawn by his friends at the House caucus, see: L. H. Coe to Polk, Louisville, [Ky.?], 7 January [1844], Polk Papers, L. C.; Cave Johnson to Polk, Washington, 9 December 1843, ibid; and George H. Martin to Van Buren, Philadelphia, 11 December 1843, quoting a letter from Congressman John Slidell of Louisiana, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

49. Aaron V. Brown to Polk, Washington, 9 December 1843, Polk Papers, L. C.

50. Alabama: F. H. Elmore to Calhoun, Charleston, 4 September 1843; F. W. Pickens to Calhoun, Charleston, 22 October 1843; and Benjamin F. Porter to Calhoun, Tuscaloosa, [Ala.], 5 February 1844; all in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 873-874, 890, and 921-922; J. Bragg to Van Buren, Mobile, 14 December 1843; and W. R. Hallett to Van Buren, Mobile, 13 December 1843; both in the Van Buren

(continued)

50, continued:

Papers, L. C.; John Witherspoon DuBose, The Life and Times of William Lowndes Yancey; A History of Political Parties in the United States, from 1834 to 1864 . . . (2 vols., New York, 1942 [c1892]), 1:130.

Mississippi: A. L. Hays to [James K. Polk], Jackson, Miss., 8 January 1844; and Williamson Smith to Polk, Madison Co., Miss., 6 February 1844; both in the Polk Papers, L. C.; and a resume of a speech by Jefferson Davis in the Mississippi convention, 3 [sic] January 1844, in: Dunbar Rowland, ed., Jefferson Davis, Constitutionalist; His Letters, Papers and Speeches (10 vols., Jackson, Miss., 1923), 1:6-9.

Louisiana: Eustis Prescott to Calhoun, New Orleans, 15 January 1844, in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 913-914.

Ohio: T. W. Bartley to Joseph H. Larwill, [Columbus, O.], 9 January 1844, Larwill Papers, O. Hist. Soc. Lib., Columbus.

Michigan: G. L. Schwartz to Van Buren, Detroit, 22 January 1844, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

Illinois: John Wentworth to Van Buren, Washington, 26 December [1843]; William Walters to Van Buren, Springfield, Ill., 29 January 1844; and Thomas Ford to Van Buren, Springfield, Ill., 10 February 1844; all ibid.

51. Pease, Frontier State, 276; John W. Forney to Buchanan, Lancaster, Pa., 2 February 1844, Forney Letters, Buchanan Papers, Hist. Soc. Pa.

52. Van Buren to Jackson, Lindenwald, [near Kinderhook, N. Y.], 13 January 1844, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

Notes to Chapter VI

1. Brown to Mrs. James K. /Sarah/ Polk, Washington, 14 January 1844, Polk Papers, L. C.

2. Wiltse, Calhoun: Sectionalist, 87-88 and 144-146; Calhoun to R. M. T. Hunter, Ft. Hill, /near Pendleton, S. C./, 2 April /1843/, misdated 1842, and /May, 1843/, a fragment, in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 529 and 533-534; J. L. O'Sullivan to Van Buren, New York, 8 December 1843; and Henry D. Gilpin to Van Buren, Washington, 10 December 1843; both in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.

3. Articles on Wright's and Van Buren's views on the tariff, reprinted from the Richmond Enquirer in the Washington Globe, 12 November and 10 December 1843; resolutions of the North Carolina legislature, ibid., 4 February 1843; Robert J. Walker to Van Buren, Washington, 31 August 1842; Samuel J. Denoon to Van Buren, Richmond, 14 June 1843; J. Bragg to Van Buren, Mobile, 28 October 1843; Peter V. Daniel to Van Buren, Jackson, Miss., 15 November 1843; A. G. Brown to Van Buren, Gallatin, Miss., 25 November 1843; W. R. Hallett to Van Buren, Mobile, 13 December 1843; and Silas Wright to Van Buren, Washington, 8 January 1844; all in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.

4. Wright to Van Buren, Washington, 8 January 1844, ibid.

5. Congressional Globe, 28th Cong., 1st sess., page 44, House proceedings, 18 December 1843; Edward J. Black to Calhoun, Washington, 8 January 1844, in: Boucher and Brooks, eds., Corr. Addressed to Calhoun, 203-204.

The vote referred to was on a motion to suspend the rules in order that Rhett could move to instruct the Ways and Means Committee to draft a bill according to the rule he proposed.

6. Congressional Globe, 28th Cong., 1st sess., pages 62-63 and 64-67, House proceedings, 21 and 22 December 1843; ibid., pages 96 and 106-108, House proceedings, 2 and 5 January 1844; Edward J. Black to Calhoun, Washington, 8 January 1844, from which the quotations are taken, in: Boucher and Brooks, eds., Corr. Addressed to Calhoun, 203-204.

7. Cave Johnson to James K. Polk, Washington, 7 January 1844, Polk Papers, L. C.

8. The report of the committee on revision of the rules was debated during the morning hour on almost every day the House was in session from 6 January through 6 February 1844, and from 16 February through 28 February 1844: Congressional Globe, 28th Cong., 1st sess., pages 108-235 and 287-335, passim. All during this time (and, as a result of the votes taken on 28 February, during the rest of the session) the House was governed by the rules of

(continued)

8, continued:

the previous House, which included the Gag Rule, but did not give the majority the power to suppress debate easily or to control the progress of bills so as to expedite the passage of their legislative program. Finally, on 11 March 1844, (ibid., page 367) Cave Johnson succeeded in amending the rules in this respect.

On the origins of the tariff bill of 1844, see: Wright to Van Buren, Washington, 8 January 1844, Van Buren Papers, L. C.; Wright to Flagg, Washington, 23 January 1844, Flagg Papers, N. Y. Pub. Lib.; Cave Johnson to James K. Polk, Washington, 21 January 1844, Polk Papers, L. C.

9. Wright to Van Buren, Washington, 8 January 1844, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

10. Wright said of one New York Congressman, David L. Seymour of Troy, who was a member of the Ways and Means Committee, that: "As yet he has thought of nothing but Rensselaer County, and how it is to be carried next fall, and I fear it may be very difficult to detach his vision from that sufficiently long to enable him to see that there are other counties in the State, or other states in the Union . . ." Wright to Flagg, Washington, 23 January 1844, Flagg Papers, N. Y. Pub. Lib.

See also: J. Miller to James K. Polk, Harrisburg, Pa., 20 January 1844, Polk Papers, L. C.; and W. R. Hallett to Van Buren, Mobile, 30 January 1844, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

11. Cave Johnson to Polk, Washington, 13 and 31 January 1844, Polk Papers, L. C.; and see below: pages 148 and 171.

12. Wright to Van Buren, Washington, 8 January 1844, Van Buren Papers, L. C.; Edward J. Black to Calhoun, Washington, 8 January 1844, in: Boucher and Brooks, eds., Corr. Addressed to Calhoun, 204.

13. Calhoun to George McDuffie, Ft. Hill, 4 December 1843, in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 552-555.

Charles M. Wiltse, in the third volume of his generally excellent biography of Calhoun, has mis-stated both Calhoun's position and his reasons for taking it. He first says that after the organization of the House, "Calhoun had no alternative but to withdraw, and he did so as soon as he learned the extent the extent of his defeat in the organization of the House." Wiltse, Calhoun: Sectionalist, 147. It is true that Calhoun did not complete the preparation of his "Address to his Political Friends and Supporters" until late December, by which time he had learned about the House caucus. But his decision to prepare the Address was made at least by 4 December--the day the caucus first met--when he wrote to

(continued)

**13, continued:**

McDuffie. His letter to McDuffie contained all the arguments he later included in the Address. There is evidence that Calhoun may have expressed similar views even earlier: R. B. Rhett to Calhoun, Washington, 16 October 1843; and F. W. Pickens to Calhoun, Charleston, 22 October 1843; both in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 887-888 and 889-890.

Wiltse further errs in saying that Calhoun had decided "to withdraw." Calhoun decided to refuse "to permit my name to go before the Baltimore Convention" and to invite his friends to decide what else to do. "If they should decide," he added,"that they cannot /cooperate with the regular Democrats/ . . . I shall stand by them, be their number ever so few, even if we should not carry a single state; but if they should decide otherwise, it will cause me no mortification or pain to stand alone, on the ground which I feel it my duty to occupy." Calhoun was quite explicitly offering himself as an independent candidate; in no case would he support the Democratic nominee. Wiltse refers to such a candidacy being threatened by "the Calhoun partisans" after the Address had been published: Wiltse, op. cit., 148. It was Calhoun himself who made the suggestion, and right from the start of the 1843-1844 session of Congress, while most of his partisans, as will be shown below, opposed it to the very last.

14. Calhoun to R. M. T. Hunter, Ft. Hill, 22 December 1843; to Armistead Burt, Ft. Hill, 23 December 1843; to Francis Wharton, Ft. Hill, 25 December 1843; and to James H. Hammond, Ft. Hill, 3 January 1844; all in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 555-556, 557, 559, and 561.

The original manuscript of Calhoun's Address is in the New York Historical Society Library, New York City. The published version appears in: Richard K. Crallé, ed., Works of John C. Calhoun (6 vols., New York, 1854-1857), 4:239-254.

15. George McDuffie to Calhoun, Washington, 3 January /1844/, in: Boucher and Brooks, eds., Corr. Addressed to Calhoun, 198. See also: McDuffie to F. H. Elmore, 31 December 1843 and 2 January /1844/, New York Historical Society.

Duff Green reported to Calhoun that, after receiving a copy of his Address, Calhoun's friends at Washington were "greatly at a loss to know what to do. . . . in utter despair of your ever being sustained, and unwilling to lose their own position in the party." Green to Calhoun, Washington, 6 January 1844, in: Boucher and Brooks, eds., Corr. Addressed to Calhoun, 199. Virgil Maxcy, one of Calhoun's most devoted friends, who visited Washington at this time, agreed with Green: "We thought we perceived a disposition with some to say . . . 'Where are we to go?' . . ." Maxcy to Calhoun, Tulip Hill, /Md./, 7 January 1844, ibid., 201. Green

(continued)

15, continued:

and Maxcy consulted Tyler's Secretary of State, Abel P. Upshur, who agreed with them that the state rights men should organize a third party. Green talked to President Tyler, too, and said the President had agreed to join such a party.

16. Lewis wrote two letters to F. H. Elmore and one to Calhoun during the first week of January 1844. The first letter to Elmore was dated 3 January 1843 and was written either late on the night of January 2-3 or late on the night of January 3-4. The second was also dated 3 January 1843 and was written about twenty-four hours after the first. Both of these letters are in the New York Historical Society. I have not seen Lewis's letter to Calhoun. He referred to it in his second letter to Elmore. Calhoun sent it to Elmore: Elmore to Calhoun, Columbia, S. C., 9 January /1844/, in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 909. Lewis said it contained the same advice as his letters to Elmore.

All of the quoted passages are from Lewis's first letter to Elmore.

Edward J. Black of Georgia, R. M. T. Hunter of Virginia, and Francis Wharton of Philadelphia all offered advice similar to Lewis's: Black to Calhoun, Washington, 8 January 1844, in: Boucher and Brooks, eds., Corr. Addressed to Calhoun, 202-204; Hunter to Calhoun, Essex Co., Va., 19 January 1844; and Wharton to Calhoun, Philadelphia, 1 February 1844; both in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 914-915 and 920. Neither Hunter nor Wharton had seen the Address but each had been informed by Calhoun of its contents.

17. F. H. Elmore to Calhoun, Columbia, S. C., 9 January /1844/, and/Charleston/, 14 January 1844, both ibid., 908-910 and 911-912.

See also: A. Mazyck to R. K. Crallé, Aiken, S. C., 13 September 1854, in: Moore, ed., "Green-Lewis-Crallé Letters," Pubns. of S. H. A., 7:420-421, for a reminiscence of the meeting at which Calhoun's advisers in Charleston decided to recommend at least the partial suppression of his Address.

18. Calhoun to Elmore, Ft. Hill, 16 January 1844, New York Historical Society; and the following letters by Calhoun: to Duff Green, Ft. Hill, 15 January and 10 February 1844; to R. M. T. Hunter, Ft. Hill, 1 February 1844; to Francis Wharton, Ft. Hill, 4 and 22 February 1844; to James Edward Calhoun, Ft. Hill, 7 and 14 February 1844; and to James H. Hammond, Ft. Hill, 5 March 1844; all in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 561-572, passim.

See also: J. R. Poinsett to Henry D. Gilpin, /near Georgetown, S. C./, 8 March 1844, Poinsett Section, Gilpin Papers, Hist. Soc. Pa.

19. Wm. H. Roane to Van Buren, Richmond, 3 February 1844; and Hugh A. Garland to Van Buren, Petersburg, /Va./, 7 February 1844; both in the Van Buren Papers, L. C. The remark by Roane quoted in the text was reported to Van Buren by Garland.

20. R. M. T. Hunter to Calhoun, Essex Co., Va., 19 January 1844; and James A. Seddon to Calhoun, Richmond, 5 February 1844; both in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 915-916 and 923-924.

21. Seddon to Calhoun, Richmond, 5 February 1844; and Hunter to Calhoun, Essex Co., Va., 6 February 1844; both ibid., 924-927 and 927-931; Dixon H. Lewis to /R. K. Crallé/, Washington, 19 March 1844, in: Moore, ed., "Green-Lewis-Crallé Letters," Pubns. of S. H. A., 7:421; Wm. H. Roane to Van Buren, Richmond, 3 February 1844; and Hugh A. Garland to Van Buren, Petersburg, /Va./, 7 February 1844; both in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.; and Ambler, "Virginia and the Presidential Succession," Turner Essays, 189-191.

Thomas Ritchie had been as fearful of the Calhoun men before the convention as they had been of him and of the other Van Buren men: Ritchie to Garland, Richmond, /8 January 1844/, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

22. Francis Wharton, in urging Calhoun not to break completely with the Van Buren Democrats in his Address, had argued that "There is not one of our great measures which we can carry if we refuse to accept of the qualified aid of even the regency politicians. They offer us their hand under the proviso that they are not to go beyond a certain mark. Let us seize hold of it and see whether . . . we may not commit them to the whole figure. Mr. Van Buren himself is susceptible of being forced, on a great emergency, to go all lengths, as the sub-treasury measure showed. Let us get him out of his hole, and when he is fairly uncovered, he will have to fight fairly, or run away." Wharton to Calhoun, Philadelphia, 1 February 1844, in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 920.

Congressman George W. Hopkins of Virginia, an ardent Van Buren man, told the Magician in mid-February that "The friends of Mr. C. still talk about a modification of the present tariff and /about/ abolition, but the signs around me, inspire the confidential belief, that they will finally fall in and give you an apparent if not cordial support." Hopkins to Van Buren, Washington, 14 February 1844, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

Both Wharton and Hopkins were right in their premises and wrong in their conclusions. Each believed that the opposing faction would make some compromises to preserve the unity of the party, which was true. Each concluded from this that the opposing faction would therefore surrender entirely, which was not true. Their views are typical of those of many other Democrats and express the false optimism which briefly prevailed in the party during mid-winter, 1843-1844.

23. Calhoun to Hunter, Ft. Hill, [near Pendleton, S. C.], 1 February 1844, in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 562; R. B. Rhett to Van Buren, Washington, 21 February 1844, Van Buren Papers, L.C.

Aaron V. Brown to Polk, Washington, 2 February 1844; and Polk to Wright, Columbia, Tenn., 9 February 1844, draft copy; both in the Polk Papers, L. C.; and John Slidell to Van Buren, Washington, 2 February 1844; George W. Hopkins to Van Buren, Washington, 14 February 1844; both in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.

24. Thomas Ritchie to Hugh A. Garland, Richmond, [8 January 1844], with note to Van Buren added by Garland; and Garland to Van Buren, Petersburg, Va., 12 January 1844; both ibid.

25. [Van Buren] to [Roane], Lindenwald, [near Kinderhook, N. Y.], 24 January 1844, "confidential," an unsigned draft copy endorsed "Letter to Wm. Roane" in Van Buren's hand, ibid. See also page 170 below.

26. Slidell to Van Buren, Washington, 2 February 1844; Van Buren to [Slidell], Albany, February 1844, draft copy; Rhett to Van Buren, Washington, 21 February 1844; Wright to Van Buren, Washington, 1 March 1844; and Van Buren to [Rhett], Kinderhook, N. Y., 10 March 1844, draft copy; all ibid.

See also: Wm. R. Hallett to Van Buren, Mobile, 30 January 1844; George W. Hopkins to Van Buren, Washington, 14 February 1844; John B. Willis to Van Buren, Washington, 4 March 1844; and W. Selden to Van Buren, Washington, 13 April 1844; all ibid.; and James K. Polk to Wright, Columbia, Tenn., 9 February 1844, Polk Papers, L. C.

27. Thus Congressman Aaron V. Brown of Tennessee reported to James K. Polk late in February that: "Our fate is wrapped up in the next few weeks. If the negro [anti-slavery petition] question is settled wrong (and we are now settling it) and if nothing can be done with the Tariff we are a lost and doomed party. If these however can be adjusted pretty well we may make a good fight. We have no enthusiasm amongst us--if we do not quarrel we do not love one another." Brown to Polk, Washington, 25 February 1844, Polk Papers, L. C.

28. Cave Johnson to Polk, Washington, 25 February 1844, ibid.; R. B. Rhett to Calhoun, Washington, 21 February 1844; Daniel E. Huger to Calhoun, Washington, 22 February 1844; and George McDuffie to Calhoun, Washington, 10 March 1844; all in: Boucher and Brooks, eds., Corr. Addressed to Calhoun, 209-210, 210, and 214-215.

29. Richard D. Davis to Dr. John P. Beckman, Washington, 23 April 1844; and Davis to Van Buren, Washington, 4 May 1844, from which the quotation is taken; both in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.

On Wright's view of the report accompanying the McKay Bill, see: Wright to John L. Russell, Washington, 20 March 1844, in: Gillet, Life and Times of Wright, 2:1517; and Wright to Van Buren, Washington, 22 March 1844, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

See also: John H. Prentiss to Van Buren, Cooperstown, N. Y., 16 May 1844, ibid.

30. Congressional Globe, 28th Cong., 1st sess., 333 and 335, House proceedings, 27 and 28 February 1844. The Gag Rule was retained, along with all other rules of the previous House, by a successful motion to table the report of the committee to revise the rules. The motion carried 88-87, with Congressmen Davis and Beardsley of New York, and a few other northern Democrats, voting no. Nearly a score of Congressmen who had been present the day before, when a motion to add the Gag Rule to the report of the committee was defeated, were not present for the final vote.

31. Ibid., 360-362, 364, 454, 495, 502-503, 517, 534, and 543, House proceedings, 8, 11, and 28 March, 9, 10, 15, 18, and 21 April 1844, for efforts to get the Bill debated. The Bill is printed on pages 360-362. Debate began 23 April and continued till 8 May 1844, ibid., pages 548-588 passim.

See also: Cave Johnson to Polk, Washington, 10 and 28 April 1844, Polk Papers, L. C.

32. J. Catron to James Buchanan, [Nashville?], 4 August [1842], Misc. Corr., Buchanan Papers, Hist. Soc. Pa.; and T. P. Moore to Van Buren, Harrodsburg, Ky., 22 October 1843; John Forsyth to Van Buren, Milledgeville, Ga., 26 November 1843; and John Davis to Van Buren, Davisville, [Pa.], 14 December 1843; all in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.

See also: J. G. M. Ramsey to James K. Polk, Mecklenburg [near Knoxville, Tenn.], 4 January 1844; and Cave Johnson to Polk, Washington, 31 January 1844; both in the Polk Papers, L. C.; Lemuel Williams to Calhoun, Boston, 8 January 1844, in: Boucher and Brooks, eds., Corr. Addressed to Calhoun, 205; S. M. Johnson to Lucius Lyon, Grand Rapids, Mich., 29 January 1844; and A. P. Stinson to Lyon, St. Joseph, Mich., 5 February 1844; both in the Lyon Papers, Clements Lib.; and John W. Forney to James Buchanan, Lancaster, Pa., 25 February 1844, Forney Letters, Buchanan Papers, Hist. Soc. Pa.

33. Wiltse, Calhoun: Sectionalist, 161-165; Theophilus Fisk to James K. Polk, Washington, 9 March 1844; Aaron V. Brown to Polk, Washington, 10 March 1844; Cave Johnson to Polk, Washington, 10 March 1844; Fisk to Polk, Washington, 13 March 1844; Polk to Fisk, Columbia, Tenn., 20 March 1844, a copy; and Robert Armstrong to Polk, Nashville, 21 and 22 March 1844; all in the Polk Papers, L. C.; and Garraty, Wright, 237-238.

34. H. J. Anderson to Van Buren, Augusta, Me., 27 January 1844, Van Buren Papers, L. C.; S. M. Johnson to Lucius Lyon, Grand Rapids, Mich., 5 February 1844, Lyon Papers, Clements Lib.;

35. Late in December, 1843, the Cass movement was almost dead. Its newspaper, the New York Standard, was about to cease publication for lack of funds. Congressman Lyon of Michigan told its editor, just after the beginning of 1844, that he talked to every one in Washington likely to assist it but had received no encouragement; he doubted that fifty dollars could be raised. John McKeon, a Democratic ward leader in New York City who hated Van Buren, saved the Standard from bankruptcy by arranging local support for it. John J. Mumford to Lyon, New York, 31 December 1843, and Lyon's summary of his reply, 2 January 1844, endorsed thereon; McKeon to Lyon, New York, 5 January /1844/; and Mumford to Lyon, New York, 6 January 1844; all ibid.

Before long Lyon had become more hopeful, and had begun writing friends in Michigan about Van Buren's unpopularity, Cass's availability, the disunity of the Democrats in Washington, and the probability of defeat in the election unless Cass was nominated in place of Van Buren. S. Y. A/tlee/ to Lyon, Detroit, 25 January 1844; and Governor John S. Barry to Lyon, 13 February 1844; both ibid.

The Cass movement in Tennessee, which had embarrassed James K. Polk and his friends in November, continued through the winter. Early in 1844 it intesified so much that Congressman Cave Johnson feared Polk might be tempted to join it. West H. Humphreys to Polk, Nashville, 7 December 1843; and Cave Johnson to Polk, Washington, 31 January, 25 February, and 6 and 29 March 1844; all in the Polk Papers, L. C.

During February, Washington was full of rumors of plans to prevent Van Buren's nomination. Van Buren to A. C. Flagg, Lindenwald, 4 February 1844, Flagg Papers, Col. Univ. Lib.; Silas Wright to Polk, Washington, 27 February 1844, Polk Papers, L. C.; and Wright to Van Buren, Washington, 20 February 1844, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

36. John McKeon et al., Executive Committee, Circular, New York, 18 January 1844, Polk Papers, L. C.; N. Ramsey to Van Buren, St. Louis, 2 February 1844; and undated clipping from N. Y. Standard enclosed in J. B. Weller to Van Buren, Washington, 4 March 1844; both in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.

37. Vincent L. Bradford to Lucius Lyon, Philadelphia, 16 January 1844, Lyon Papers, Clements Lib.; Wright to Van Buren, Washington, 20 February 1844; and Thomas N. Carr to Van Buren, Albany, 22 February 1844, enclosing a copy of Carr to Levi A. Slamm, Albany, 22 February 1844; all in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.; and R. H. Gillet to Van Buren, Ogdensburgh, N. Y., 4 April 1844, ibid., denying a report in the New York Standard that he had presided at a Cass meeting.

38. /Van Buren/, "Draft of letter to Mr. Wright," Albany, 26 February 1844; and Wright to Van Buren, Washington, 1 March 1844; both ibid.

Cave Johnson to Polk, Washington, 31 January 1844, Polk Papers, L. C.; S. Y. A/tlee/ to Lucius Lyon, Detroit, 25 January 1844; and Governor John S. Barry to Lyon, Detroit, 13 February 1844; both in the Lyon Papers, Clements Lib.; and John B. Weller to Van Buren, Washington, 4 March 1844, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

39. Wright to Van Buren, Washington, 20 February 1844, ibid.

An important factor in the decision to back Johnson for the vice presidential nomination was the insistence on it of the Pennsylvania Democrats who, on 7 January 1844, nominated Van Buren and Johnson at a Harrisburg mass meeting. See: James Ross Snowden to Van Buren, Harrisburg, 20 January 1844; Seth Salisbury to Van Buren, Harrisburg, 22 January 1844; and Jacob Fry, Jr., to Van Buren, Montgomery Co., Pa., 25 January 1844; all ibid.

40. Gilpin to Van Buren, Philadelphia, 1 March 1844, ibid.

Notes to Chapter VII

1. Johnson to Lucius Lyon, Detroit, 9 May 1844, Lyon Papers, Clements Lib.

2. Justin H. Smith, The Annexation of Texas (corrected edition, New York, 1941), 52-75, 103-129, and 136-137; George Lockhart Rives, The United States and Mexico, 1821-1848; A History of the Relations Between the Two Countries . . . (2 vols., New York, 1913), 1:389-416, 505-524, and 555-592; Chitwood, Tyler, 342-347.

3. Virgil Maxcy to John C. Calhoun, Washington, 10 December 1843; Thomas W. Gilmer to Calhoun, Washington, 13 December 1843; R. M. T. Hunter to Calhoun, Essex Co., Va., 19 December 1843; all in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 902-904, 904-906, and 906-908.

Cave Johnson to James K. Polk, Washington, 9 December 1843 and 29 March 1844; and Aaron V. Brown to Polk, Washington, 9 December 1843 and 2 February 1844; all in the Polk Papers, L. C.

C. McAlester to James Buchanan, Philadelphia, 13 December 1843, Misc. Corr., Buchanan Papers, Hist. Soc. Pa.; W. Selden to Van Buren, Washington, 25 November 1843; and Wm. L. Marcy to Van Buren, Albany, 1 December 1843; both in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.; Smith, Annexation, 182.

4. Letcher to Ritchie, Lexington, Va., 23 September 1843; Stevenson to Van Buren, the Retreat [near Richmond], 8 October 1843; and Roane to Van Buren, Tree Hill, [near Richmond], 17 October 1843; all in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.

5. Wm. L. Marcy to Van Buren, Albany, 1 December 1843, ibid., reported on Blair's desire for an opportunity to endorse annexation. Marcy had just returned from Washington where he had talked with Blair.

Blair wrote Van Buren from Washington, 18 March 1844, ibid., about Jackson's letter endorsing annexation, which was addressed to Aaron V. Brown of Tennessee. Blair said that Thomas W. Gilmer gave Jackson's letter "into my hands for publication before the adjournment of Congress last year." He enclosed a copy of Jackson's letter. Henry D. Gilpin of Philadelphia also mentioned the Jackson letter on annexation in a letter to Van Buren of 16 February 1844, ibid., and said that he had a copy of it.

Despite all this evidence in the Van Buren Papers, which he listed in his bibliography, James C. N. Paul, in his Rift in the Democracy, repeated the old story that Jackson's letter was deliberately concealed until just before the 1844 Democratic convention as part of a plot against Van Buren. Paul, op. cit.,

6. Wright to Van Buren, Washington, 8 April 1844, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

7. Forsyth to Memucan Hunt, Washington, 25 August 1837, in: U. S. Congress, H. R. Document 40, 25th Cong., 1st sess., 11-13. This note is quoted at length in: Rives, U. S. and Mexico, 1:408-409.

8. Ibid., 410-416; Smith, Annexation, 65-68.

9. Ibid., 130-133, 139, 181-184, and 191; Rives, U. S. and Mexico, 1:587-588; resolutions of the Vermont legislature, in Niles Register, 63:227, 10 December 1843.

See also: Ambrose Spencer to N. P. Tallmadge, Washington, 23 March 1844, Tallmadge Papers, St. Hist Soc. Wis.; Salmon P. Chase et al. to James K. Polk, Cincinatti, 31 March 1844, Polk Papers, L. C.; Wm. Parry to Van Buren, Cincinatti, 29 March 1844; Jabez D. Hammond to Van Buren, Cherry Valley, N. Y., 7 April 1844; J. Gould to Van Buren, New York, 13 April 1844; and A. Vanderpoel to Van Buren, New York, 13 April 1844; all in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.

10. Andrew Jackson observed, after Van Buren had come out against immediate annexation, that if he had "taken a view of the population of Texas," he might have judged better "the feelings of the South and West." Jackson to B. F. Butler 13/?/ May 1844, ibid. See also: H. Yoakum to Van Buren, Murphreesboro', Tenn., 6 June 1845, ibid.

11. Shenton, Walker, 1-38.

12. Ibid., 38; Smith, Annexation, 140-145.

13. Jackson to Aaron V. Brown, Nashville, Tenn., 12 February 1843, copy, filed 18 March 1844, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

Jackson's letter was first published in the Richmond Enquirer of 22 March 1844, incorrectly dated 12 February 1844, which error was corrected the next day but has nevertheless been considered evidence of the existence of a plot to suppress Jackson's letter until just before the Democratic national convention of 1844. See: Ambler, Ritchie, 236-237.

14. Rives, U. S. and Mexico, 1:577-617; Smith, Annexation, 147-179 and 194-223; and Wiltse, Calhoun: Sectionalist, 157-167 and 170.

15. On 5 April Wright received a letter from Van Buren asking for information on the legislative history of the diplomatic recognition of the Texan Republic early in 1837. Van Buren's letter was probably written the 1st or 2nd of April. Wright replied to and mentioned it in a letter to Van Buren from Washington, 6 April

(continued)

**15, continued:**

1844, in the Van Buren Papers, L. C. On 8 April Wright wrote again, in response to a letter from Van Buren dated the 5th; Wright said, "I perceive that your mind is made up . . ." but he also plainly stated that he did not know what Van Buren would say about annexation. The decision by Van Buren to which he referred was probably only a decision to announce his views.

On Van Buren's refusal to respond to his Virginia friends' queries, see: Wright to Van Buren, 1 and 3 April 1844, ibid., in the second of which Wright summarized a letter Van Buren had written to someone in Virginia, and Wm. H. Roane to Van Buren, Richmond, 30 April 1844, ibid., acknowledging receipt of a "secret" letter from Van Buren dated 28 March 1844.

Ritchie to /Wright/, Richmond, 20 March 1844; Marcy to Van Buren, Albany, 1 December 1843 and Southbridge, Mass., 20 March 1844; and George Bancroft to Van Buren, Boston, 28 March 1844; all pressed Van Buren to speak out on the subject, as did also the following letters to Van Buren which, like these, are ibid.: J. F. Powell, Vilna, Ark., 27 March 1844; Wm. Parry, Cincinatti, 29 March 1844; W. Fulton, Washington, 31 March 1844; and Tilghman Tucker, Washington, 12 April 1844.

On the inquiry of the three Congressmen who left it up to Van Buren whether to answer, see: Wright to Van Buren, Washington, 1 and 11 April 1844, ibid.

Hamnet to Van Buren, Washington, 27 March 1844, copy; and Wright to Van Buren, Washington, 6 and 11 April 1844; all ibid.

Van Buren was also formally interrogated by: George N. Sanders et al., Corresponding Committee of a pro-annexation meeting, Ghent, Ky., 25 November 1843, /postmarked 9 December 1843/; Sanders et al., another committee, Ghent, Ky., 10 April 1844; David Shields and James Clarke, committee, Pittsburgh, December 1843, /postmarked 23 January/; A. Gordon et al., committee, Cincinatti, 28 March 1844; and Philip Hoyne, Galena, Ill., 4 February 1844; all ibid.

16. Wm. H. Wilder to Van Buren, New Orleans, 2 March 1844, ibid.

17. Wright to Van Buren, 6, 8, 11, and 14 April 1844; Flagg to Van Buren, Albany, 6 April 1844; and Paulding to Van Buren, New York, 16 April 1844; all ibid.

18. /Van Buren/ to /Wm. H. Hamnet/, Lindenwald, 20 April 1844, /final draft/, ibid. This is a manuscript of more than thirty-five legal size sheets, with writing on both sides. It is in the hand of Martin Van Buren, Jr., but the salutation, part of the dateline, and minor corrections are in the hand of the senior Van Buren, in pencil. Comparison with a printed version, in the Columbus Ohio

(continued)

18, continued:

Statesman, 7 May 1844, which is ibid., shows that this is the final draft.

The day of the month (20) is the date is written in ink, unlike the rest of the date which is in pencil. The letter was composed during the first ten or twelve days of April. It was sent to James K. Paulding to read and arrived at his home while he was away--between the afternoon of the 12th and the evening of the 15th. He returned it to Van Buren on the 16th and soon afterward it was on its way to Washington, arriving there the night of 26 April 1844. See: Paulding to Van Buren, New York, 16 April 1844; and Wright to Van Buren, Washington, 29 April 1844; both ibid.

19. /Van Buren/ to /Hamet/, Lindenwald, 20 April 1844, ibid.

20. The quotations are from: S. M. Johnson to Lucius Lyon, Detroit, 11 May 1844, Lyon Papers, Clements Lib.

Francis Wharton, a Calhoun man, referred, in contrast, to "The frankness, and I must add, the unexpected logicalness of Mr. Van Buren's letter . . ." Wharton to Calhoun, Philadelphia, 22 May 1844, in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 958. But Wharton agreed with Johnson in interpreting the letter as opposing annexation, and so did many others: Wm. J. Brown to Van Buren, Washington, 29 April 1844; Seth Salisbury to Van Buren, Williamsport, Pa., 6 May 1844; and Alfred Balch to Van Buren, Nashville, 22 May 1844; all in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.; John M. Read to Buchanan, Philadelphia, 3 May 1844, John M. Read Letters, Meredith-Clymer-Read Collection, New York Public Library; William R. King to Buchanan, New York, 10 May 1844, Misc. Corr., Buchanan Papers, Hist. Soc. Pa.; and Williamson Smith to Polk, Washington, 29 April 1844; J. H. Bills to Polk, Bolivar, Tenn., 12 May 1844; and A. Yell to Polk, Little Rock, Ark., 21 June 1844; all in the Polk Papers, L. C.

21. Washington Globe, 6 May 1844; Cave Johnson to Polk, Washington, 5 May 1844; and S. H. Laughlin to Polk, Nashville, 8 May 1844; both in the Polk Papers, L. C.; J. F. H. Claiborne to Van Buren, Natchez, Miss., 4 June 1844, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

22. S. H. Laughlin to Polk, Washington, 23 May 1844, Polk Papers, L. C.

23. Van Buren's concern about the effect the issue would have on himself because of the sectional response to it and his consequent suspicion of those who agitated this issue are shown by two letters of Wright to Van Buren from Washington, 1 and 3 April 1844, Van Buren Papers, L. C. In the first of these Wright replied to Van Buren's questions about the intentions of three New York Congressmen who had questioned the Magician about annexation. In the second letter to Van Buren, Wright summarized a letter he had

(continued)

23, continued:

written which, he said, was patterned after a letter Van Buren had prepared, employing the same arguments.

Friends of Van Buren expressed similar feelings: Amos Kendall to Van Buren, Washington, 29 April 1844; Wright to Van Buren, Washington, 13 and 20 May 1844; Thomas N. Carr to Van Buren, New York, 15 May 1844; Henry D. Gilpin to Van Buren, Philadelphia, 23 May 1844; and Peter V. Daniel to Van Buren, Richmond, 11 June 1844; all in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.; and Robert Armstrong to Polk, Nashville, 7 May [1844], Polk Papers, L. C.

24. Wright to Van Buren, Washington, 3 April 1844, Van Buren Papers, L. C. In this letter, referred to in Note 23 above, Wright specifically imputed certain ideas, quoted in the text, to Van Buren.

See also: A. C. Hand to Van Buren, Elizabethtown, N. Y., 20 November 1843; Wm. L. Wait to Van Buren, Greenville, Ill., 25 January 1844; and Jabez D. Hammond to Van Buren, Cherry Valley, N. Y., 7 April 1844; all ibid.

In March, 1844, a resolution against the Gag Rule had attracted considerable support from Democrats in the New York legislature. See: Auguste Davezac to Van Buren, Albany, 9 March 1844; Wright to Van Buren, Washington, 22 March 1844; and A. C. Flagg to Van Buren, Albany, 24 March 1844; all ibid. Van Buren almost certainly disapproved of this resolution and Wright definitely did, but Van Buren was blamed, by the newspaper which spoke for the Tyler Administration, for the passage of the resolution. See: Washington Madisonian, 21 March 1844, cited in: Smith, Annexation, 238. Such treatment would hardly encourage Van Buren to take the southern side of a new sectional issue.

Even before the Texas issue was raised, Van Buren had complained of the repeated sacrifices which northern Democrats had been called upon to make for the sake of the southern wing of the party, and of the criticism they had suffered in the North because of their efforts to conciliate the South. Van Buren to Blair, Lindenwald, 12 September 1842, Blair Papers, quoted in Smith, Blair Family, 1:157.

25. Unsigned, undated, partly torn manuscript, in the handwriting of Martin Van Buren, Jr., filed 31 December 1844, Van Buren Papers, L. C. The words and parts of words bracketed in the quotation in the text have been deduced from the context of the fragment.

26. John Fairfield to his wife, Washington, 28 April 1844, in: Arthur G. Staples, ed., The Letters of John Fairfield (Lewiston, Me., 1922), 335; Wm. R. King to James Buchanan, New York, 10 May 1844, Misc. Corr., Buchanan Papers, Hist. Soc. Pa.

27. See pages 112-113 and note 16 to Chapter V, above.

28. /Van Buren/ to /Roane/, Lindenwald, 24 January 1844, "confidential," an unsigned draft endorsed by Van Buren: "Letter to Mr. Roane;" and Roane to Van Buren, Richmond, 30 April 1844; both in the Van Buren Papers, L. C. Roane incorrectly referred to Van Buren's letter as having been written in February.

29. On the Connecticut elections, see: Colin M. Ingersoll to John C. Calhoun, New Haven, 3 April 1844, in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 944-945; Wright to Van Buren, Washington, 3 April 1844; and Perry Smith to Van Buren, New Milford, Conn., 22 April 1844; both in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.; and Andrew T. Judson to Polk, Canterbury, Conn., 12 July 1844, Polk Papers, L. C.

On the New York City election: /S. J. Tilden/ to -------, New York, 10 April 1844, unsigned draft, Tilden Papers, N. Y. Pub. Lib.

For evidence of the renewed "Van Buren cannot win" campaign, see: William C. Greenly to Robert McClelland, Adrian, Mich., 16 April 1844, Robert McClelland Papers, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library, Detroit, Mich.; Amos Kendall to Van Buren, Washington, 19 and 20 April 1844; and T. N. Carr to Van Buren, Albany, 20 April 1844; all in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.

30. Cave Johnson to Polk, Washington, 10, 15, and 28 April and 8 and 12 May 1844; all in the Polk Papers, L. C.; Congressional Globe, 28th Cong., 1st sess., pages 543-561, passim, House proceedings, 21-27 April 1844.

See also: S. M. Johnson to Lucius Lyon, Grand Rapids, Mich., 9 January 1844; and Thos. C. Sheldon to James B. Hunt and Robert McClelland, Detroit, 18 February 1844; both in the Lyon Papers, Clements Lib.; and Wm. L. Wait to Van Buren, Greenville, Ill., 30 March 1844, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

31. Wright to Van Buren, Washington, 29 April 1844, ibid.

Major Abraham Van Buren, the Magician's son, delivered the reply to Hammet to Wright on the night of 26 April. Wright read it at once before going to bed. In the morning he learned that Clay's "Raleigh Letter" against annexation had been published during the night by the Washington National Intelligencer. Fearing that Democrats would attack Clay in such a way as to embarrass them when they learned of Van Buren's position, Wright rushed the reply to Hammet into print in the Washington Globe that night. Wright commented to Van Buren (in the letter above cited) that it was "fortunate" that the reply to Hammet had arrived when it had.

The National Intelligencer and the Globe both went to press at the same time--about midnight--but were dated differently. The Intelligencer of 27 April 1844 was published very early in the

(continued)

31, continued:

morning of the 27th; the Globe of the same date was published very late at night on the 27th--twenty-four hours later. On this point, see the answer, in the Globe of 22 April 1843, to complaints by subscribers that it was being held up in the mails.

The matter of timing of the two letters, Van Buren's and Clay's, is of some importance because of the myth, based on nothing more than the assumption of Carl Schurz (in his Life of Henry Clay, 2 vols., Boston, 1888, 2:243) that there was collusion between Clay and Van Buren to suppress the Texas issue by agreeing on it. Schurz's theory is based, in turn, on the alleged similarity of the views expressed in the two letters--a similarity, it should be added, which never existed--their coincidental publication, and the fact that Van Buren visited Clay in Kentucky during the Magician's trip through the South and West in 1842.

This conspiracy theory has won wide acceptance. Ambler, in his life of Ritchie, page 237, speaks of it as an established fact. So does Elbert B. Smith, in his Magnificent Missourian; The Life of Thomas Hart Benton (Philadelphia and New York, 1958), 194. Klein, in Pres. Buchanan, 159, noncommittally says that "Historians assume . . ." that Clay and Van Buren made such a deal.

Competent historians do not assume, nor do they accept the unjustified assertions of other historians. Rives, in his U. S. and Mexico, 1:622, 623, doubts the story, but asserts that "there was a somewhat general belief that . . . [Clay and Van Buren], who were on friendly terms, had agreed . . ." I have seen no evidence of a contemporary suspicion of collusion, nor of any friendliness between Clay and Van Buren. Smith, Annexation, simply says nothing about the myth of collusion between the two candidates. Wiltse, in Calhoun: Sectionalist, note 7 to Chap. XIII, on page 511, doubts the story on the grounds that by April, 1844, it was impossible for Van Buren and Clay, even if in collusion, to keep the Texas issue out of the election.

Wiltse's point is a sound one, and ought to dispose of the matter, but some additional objections to Schurz's theory are even stronger. In the first place, as far as Van Buren was concerned, it was precisely because annexation had already been made a major issue that he wrote his reply to Hammet. Secondly, the timing of the drafting, delivery, and publication of the reply to Hammet renders it virtually impossible that there could have been any collusion between Van Buren and Clay, unless Wright was the agent of the collusion. But Wright's letters to Van Buren during April 1844 demonstrate conclusively that he did not know what Van Buren was going to say, when Van Buren's letter would arrive, what Clay was going to say, or when Clay's letter would be printed. They also show that Wright had discretion either to publish or not to publish Van Buren's reply to Hammet. Of course, Wright might have

(continued)

**31, continued:**

lied when he wrote these letters, but why should he have lied to Van Buren? The only explanation of these letters consistent with the conspiracy theory is that Wright and Van Buren created a phony correspondence to fool future historians.

In one of his letters to Van Buren during April, written the 8th, Wright actually reported to Van Buren a proposal from Secretary of the Treasury Ambrose Spencer, an anti-Texas Whig, that Van Buren and Clay agree to give annexation a qualified approval. Spencer claimed to know Clay's views on the subject (he did not) and to know what Clay thought Van Buren would say (wrong again). He made his proposal to B. F. Butler, who was then in Washington en route to visit Jackson in Tennessee. Butler referred Spencer to Wright, who wrote Van Buren that he would either try to pump Spencer for more information as to Clay's views, or simply brush him off, as Van Buren wished. As Wright never referred to him again in his letters to Van Buren, apparently Van Buren suggested that Spencer be ignored. Once again, short of the deliberate falsification of letters by Wright, there is no way to explain this episode if Wright knew that Van Buren had already made an arrangement with Clay. And if Wright did not know about it, but such an arrangement had been made, why was Wright given complete discretion by Van Buren either to publish or to suppress the reply to Hammet?

Schurz's theory is, of course, absurd on the face of it and would not be worthy of mention had not so many uncritical historians swallowed it. In 1842, when Van Buren visited Clay, Texas was not an issue and there is no evidence that either of them had any reason to believe it would become one. Secondly, although Van Buren always maintained ostensibly pleasant relations with Clay, his letters to Wright and Wright's responses, during 1841 and 1842, are full of suspicion and hatred of Clay, which that gentleman, himself a good hater, no doubt cordially reciprocated. Imagine, then, the scene at Ashland, at which the bargain is made. Which man suggests it, and in what language? Was it Van Buren? We have seen how little inclined he was to take the initiative, especially if it meant trying to control the actions of others directly. Was it Clay? And did Van Buren, who when Jackson wanted to remove the deposits from the Bank of the United States had been afraid to give advice until he had consulted with Wright and Flagg, agree to such a proposal as this, coming from an enemy out of a clear sky, without consulting anyone? And how was such a deal to be enforced? Did Van Buren and Clay simply trust one another? Or, if one proved false to his word, was the other to announce that such a deal had been made, and denounce the other for breaking it?

The question remains, why then did Clay invite Van Buren to visit him? Van Buren knew Clay far better than Schurz did, so his guess is the more authoritative. He believed at the time that Clay, who was then in the midst of a bitter struggle with President Tyler,

(continued)

31, continued:

wanted to let Tyler know, or lead him to believe, that Clay hated Tyler more than Van Buren, in the hope perhaps of frightening the President into submission. Wright to Van Buren, Washington, 2 April 1842, Van Buren Papers, L. C. Wright said that he thought Van Buren was correct in attributing Clay's invitation to the motive of frightening Tyler.

On Clay's letter, see: Smith, Annexation, 239-242, and Rives, U. S. and Mexico, 1:622-625.

On the reception first of Clay's and then of Van Buren's letter in Washington, see: Wright to Van Buren, Washington, 29 April 1844, Van Buren Papers, L. C.; and Cave Johnson to Polk, Washington, 28 April 1844, Polk Papers, L. C.

On the reaction of Nashville Democrats to the two letters, see: L. P. Cheatham to Polk, Nashville, 7 May 1844, ibid.

Alfred Balch, in a letter to Van Buren from Nashville, 22 May 1844, Van Buren Papers, L. C., reported a similar incident at Gallatin, Tennessee. Wm. H. Roane, writing from Richmond, 30 April 1844, /mailed 7 May/, and Thomas Ritchie, Richmond, 5 May 1844, both in the Van Buren Papers, L. C., both emphasized the unfortunate timing of the two letters in describing to Van Buren the adverse reaction to his reply to Hammet in Virginia.

32. Wright to Van Buren, Washington, 29 April and 6 May 1844; Wm. J. Brown to Van Buren, Washington, 29 April 1844; Amos Kendall to Van Buren, Washington, 29 April 1844; and Preston King to Van Buren, Washington, 7 May 1844; all in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.; and Cave Johnson to Polk, Washington, 28 and 30 April and 5 May 1844, Polk Papers, L. C.

33. Wiltse, Calhoun: Sectionalist, 167-171; and Smith, Annexation, 200-218.

Wiltse's suggestion (note 7 to Chap. XIII, on page 511), that there might have been some connection between the publication of the Treaty and documents by the New York Evening Post and the publication of the reply to Hammet, is not borne out by the facts. The dates on the letters connected with the preparation of the reply to Hammet show that it was written before the Pakenham Letter was written by Calhoun, and was en route to Washington at the time the Treaty and documents were being conveyed to New York for publication. (The documents were not communicated to the Senate until 22 April.) Assuming that someone sent the Pakenham Letter directly to Van Buren on the day it was transmitted to the Senate, he could not have adjusted his reply to Hammet and got it to Washington by the night of the 26th. Nor could the editor of the Post, or Senator Tappan, have acted as they did because they knew Van Buren's

(continued)

33, continued:

reply to Hammet was being published and opposed immediate annexation, because the reply arrived in Washington so late and because the decision to publish it in the Globe was not made until the 27th. There simply was not time for collusion between Washington and Kinderhook, or between Washington and New York.

Wright may have known that Tappan planned to leak the Pakenham Letter to the Post, and his decision to publish the reply to Hammet at once may have been based partly on that knowledge. He did not mention any such consideration in his letter to Van Buren explaining his decision to print the reply at once (29 April 1844, Van Buren Papers, L. C.) but then, that was not the sort of information which would likely have been entrusted to the mails: Tappan was violating the rules of the Senate. There is, however, no evidence of a positive nature connecting the two publications. Unlike the almost simultaneous publication of Clay's Raleigh Letter and Van Buren's reply to Hammet, which had a cause--namely, Wright's fear of the Democratic reaction to Clay's letter--the simultaneous publication of Calhoun's letter to Pakenham and Van Buren's reply to Hammet appears to have been a coincidence, a species of event which has been known to occur from time to time.

34. Washington Globe, 29 May 1844; Amos Kendall to Van Buren, Washington, 29 May 1844, Van Buren Papers, L. C.; Cave Johnson to Polk, Washington, 30 April and 3 and 5 May 1844, Polk Papers, L. C.

Benton's letter was a reply to a letter from a group of Texans, urging him to support annexation.

35. Cave Johnson to Polk, Washington, 3 and 5 May 1844, Polk Papers, L. C.; Washington Globe, May and June 1844, passim; Thomas Ritchie to Howell Cobb, Richmond, 6 May 1844, in: Randolph-Macon Historical Papers, 3(1909-1912):355; Wright to Van Buren, Washington, 6 May 1844, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

The description of Senator Allen is a paraphrase of a remark by Senator John Fairfield, in a letter to his wife, Washington, 4 February 1846, in: Staples, ed., Fairfield Letters, 385.

36. Wm. H. Roane to Van Buren, Richmond, 30 April 1844, [mailed 7 May]; "Q in the Corner" to Van Buren, Petersburg, Va., 1 May 1844; Thomas Ritchie to Van Buren, Richmond, 7 May 1844; and Roane to Van Buren, Richmond, 7 May 1844; all in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.; and Ritchie to Cobb, Richmond, 6 May 1844, in: Randolph-Macon Historical Papers, 3:355-356.

37. R. Armstrong to James K. Polk, Nashville, 7 May [1844]; and Cave Johnson to Polk, Washington, 5 May 1844; both in the Polk Papers, L. C.; and Claiborne to Van Buren, Natchez, 4 June 1844; and Ewing to Van Buren, Springfield, Ill., 26 May 1844; both in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.

38. Wright to J. L. Russell, Washington, 22 May 1844, in: Gillet, Life and Times of Wright, 2:1519-1520; Wright to B. F. Butler, Washington, 25 May 1844, Silas Wright Papers, Personal (Miscellaneous) Collection, New York Public Library; resolutions of the Indianapolis Central Democratic Club, at a meeting on 11 May 1844, reprinted from the Indianapolis Indiana State Sentinel in the Columbus Ohio Statesman, extra edition of 20 May 1844, a copy of which is in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.; Cave Johnson to Polk, Washington, 30 April 1844, Polk Papers, L. C.; and the following letters in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.: Wright to Van Buren, Washington, 6, 13, and 20 May 1844; A. C. Dodge to Van Buren, Washington, 30 April 1844; John Law to Van Buren, Indianapolis, 15 May 1844; Gouverneur Kemble to Major [Abraham Van Buren], Cold Springs, N. Y., 18 May 1844; and Van Buren to Ritchie, Lindenwald, 16 May 1844.

39. Williamson Smith to Polk, Washington, 29 April 1844; and John H. Bills to Polk, Bolivar, Tenn., 11 May 1844; both in the Polk Papers, L. C.; and S. M. Johnson to Lucius Lyon, Detroit, 9 May 1844, Lyon Papers, Clements Lib.

L. P. Cheatham of Nashville, Tenn., despaired: "If V. B. had modified his answer a little stronger we could have carried this State--we are rather down in the mouth . . ." Letter to Polk, Nashville, 7 May 1844, Polk Papers, L. C.

H. S. Turney, a former Tennessee Congressman and future Senator, raged: "Van's Letter has played Hell with us. . . . Are we to submit to be sacrifised [sic] now and perhaps forever . . . ?" Letter to Polk, Winchester, Tenn., 14 May 1844, ibid.

## Notes to Chapter VIII

1. Hudson to A. H. Tracy, Baltimore, 27 May 1844, Tracy Papers, N. Y. St. Lib.

2. Amos Kendall to Van Buren, Washington, 13 May 1844, Van Buren Papers, L. C.; Orville Hungerford to Flagg, Washington, 6 and 11 May 1844; and Preston King to Flagg, Washington, 7 May 1844; both in the Flagg Papers, N. Y. Pub. Lib.; and the following letters in the Polk Papers, L. C.: R. Armstrong to Polk, Nashville, [5 May 1844]; J. G. M. Ramsey to Polk, Mecklenburg, [near Knoxville], 20 May 1844; Gideon J. Pillow to Polk, Washington, 22 May 1844; S. H. Laughlin to Polk, Washington, 22 May 1844; E. G. Eastman to Polk, Knoxville, 25 May 1844; West H. Humphreys to Polk, Nashville, 3 June 1844; and Lackfield Macklin to Polk, Little Rock, Ark., 14 June 1844.

3. Van Buren to Wright, Lindenwald, [near Kinderhook, N. Y.], 10 May 1844, two drafts, one in Van Buren's hand and the other, which appears to be the final draft, in the hand of Martin Van Buren, Jr., Van Buren Papers, L. C. See also: Wright to Van Buren, Washington, 13 May 1844, ibid., which indicates that this letter, or some similar one, was sent to Wright at Washington and was shown by him to some of the discontented Democrats, on whom it had the desired effect, Wright thought.

4. Amos Kendall to Van Buren, Washington, 13 May 1844; John C. Rives to Martin Van Buren, Jr., Washington, 20 and 21 May 1844 and, under the pseudonym of "John C. Haines," 24 May 1844; and George Bancroft to Van Buren, Washington, 23 and 24 May 1844; all ibid. Bancroft's letters are printed in: "Van Buren-Bancroft Corr.," Mass. Hist. Soc. Proc., 42:429 and 430.

See also: Gideon J. Pillow to Polk, Washington, 22 May 1844; and S. H. Laughlin to Polk, Washington, 23 May 1844; both in the Polk Papers, L. C.; Wright to B. F. Butler, Washington, 18 May 1844, Wright Papers, Pers. (Misc.) Coll., N. Y. Pub. Lib.; and Henry K. Smith to A. H. Tracy, Baltimore, 22 May 1844, Tracy Papers, N. Y. St. Lib.

5. Cass to Edward A. Hannegan, Detroit, 10 May 1844, printed in the Washington Globe, 16 May 1844. Stewart's and Woodbury's endorsements of annexation appeared in the same issue of the Globe. Buchanan was known, at least by mid-May, to favor annexation, but he did not publish a letter on the subject: Wright to Butler, Washington, 17 May 1844, Wright Papers, Pers. (Misc.) Coll., N. Y. Pub. Lib. Col. Johnson committed himself for Texas in a letter published in Niles Register on 6 April 1844 and in another which appeared in the Washington Globe, 21 May 1844; see: Meyer, Life and Times of Johnson, 464-465.

6. Buchanan to Henry Foster et al., Washington, 25 May 1844, copy, Letters and Drafts, Buchanan Papers, Hist. Soc. Pa., also printed in: Curtis, Buchanan, 1:520. Buchanan showed this letter to Silas Wright; Wright to Butler, Washington, 26 May 1844, Wright Papers, Pers. (Misc.) Coll., N. Y. Pub. Lib.

John M. Read to Buchanan, Philadelphia, 3 May 1844, Read Papers, Meredith-Clymer-Read Coll., N. Y. Pub. Lib.; Simon Cameron to Buchanan, Middletown, Pa., 7 and 15 May 1844, Cameron Letters, Buchanan Papers, Hist. Soc. Pa.; and Wm. R. King to Buchanan, New York, 10 and 14 May 1844; Hendrick B. Wright to Buchanan, Wilkes Barre, Pa., 13 May 1844; and Henry Welsh to Buchanan, York, Pa., 20 May 1844; all in Misc. Corr., ibid.

Calhoun had meant what he said, in his "Address," about his unwillingness to compete for the nomination of the Democratic national convention. Furthermore, he had accepted the office of Secretary of State on the explicit understanding that he was no longer a candidate for President: Tyler to Calhoun, Washington, 6 March 1844, in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 939; John R. St. John to A. H. Tracy, Washington, 1 May 1844, Tracy Papers, N. Y. St. Lib.; T. H. Carr to Van Buren, New York City, 3 April 1844; and Wright to Van Buren, Washington, 8 April 1844; Van Buren Papers, L. C.; and Calhoun to Mrs. T. G. Clemson, Washington, 10 May 1844; and Calhoun to Francis Wharton, Washington, 28 May 1844; both in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 585-586 and 592.

Just before his appointment to the State Department, Calhoun's close friends had decided that South Carolina would not send a delegation to the Democratic national convention. Some of them were wondering how "to get [his] name back again" in case it became necessary to run him as an independent candidate for President. See: F. W. Pickens to Calhoun, Charleston, 3 March 1844, ibid., 933-934. It should be added that the possibility of his independent candidacy was discussed in connection with the failure of the House of Representatives to pass a satisfactory tariff reduction bill, not in reference to the annexation issue.

After Van Buren's reply to Hammet was published, a number of Calhoun's friends urged that he become a candidate again: James Gadsden to Calhoun, Charleston, 3 May 1844; James H. Hammond to Calhoun, Silver Bluff, S. C., 10 May 1844; and John S. Barbour to Calhoun, Warrenton, Va., 11 May 1844; all ibid., 952-953, 954, and 955-956. See also: Felix Connolly to Van Buren, New Orleans, 10 May 1844, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

Calhoun was deeply interested in the Baltimore convention, but because of the effect it would have on annexation, not because he expected or hoped to get its presidential nomination. See: Calhoun to R. M. T. Hunter, Washington, 21 May 1844; and to Francis Wharton, Washington, 28 May 1844; and F. W. Pickens to Calhoun, Baltimore, [28 May 1844]; all in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 591, 592-

(continued)

**6, continued:**

593, and 959-960. Pickens could not understand why nothing was being done for Calhoun at Baltimore. Calhoun had urged Hunter to stop at Washington en route to Baltimore for instructions. If he did stop, and if his instructions were consistent with what Calhoun wrote Wharton while the convention was in progress, nothing was being done for Calhoun at Baltimore because he had forbidden that anything be done for him.

Some authors, misled by the conjectures and by the almost paranoid suspicions of such ardent Van Buren men as Silas Wright, Cave Johnson, Thomas Hart Benton, and Francis P. Blair, insist on believing that Calhoun's interest in annexation was connected with his presidential ambitions. To prove this, they sometimes cite letters of Calhoun's friends to him, urging him to connect his candidacy with the proposal of annexation. It is wiser to consult Calhoun himself on the point.

Despite the urging of many friends that he either refer to annexation in his "Address" or delay publication of the "Address" until annexation had become a major issue, Calhoun did not do either. See: R. B. Rhett to Calhoun, Washington, 16 October 1843; Virgil Maxcy to Calhoun, West River, Md., 3 December 1843, and Washington, 10 December 1843; R. M. T. Hunter to Calhoun, Essex Co., Va., 19 December 1843; and F. H. Elmore to Calhoun, Columbia, S. C., 9 January [1844], misdated 1843; all in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 888, 896-897, 900-904, 906-908, and 908-910. See also: Maxcy to Calhoun, West River, Md., 14 December 1843, in: Boucher and Brooks, eds., Corr. Addressed to Calhoun, 192-193.

When Thomas W. Gilmer, a member of Tyler's Cabinet, asked Calhoun's opinion of annexation, for publication, Calhoun replied that he favored the measure but did not want his views publicized because it would look like electioneering. This was on Christmas Day, 1843, just after Calhoun had completed the draft of his "Address" in which he offered to run for President as an independent but before he learned that his friends would not support him as such. Calhoun to Gilmer, Ft. Hill, 25 December 1843, in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 559-560. Again, while the publication and the contents of the "Address" were under consideration by Calhoun's friends, F. H. Elmore sent word by Calhoun's son that, among other changes in the "Address," Calhoun should mention annexation. Calhoun's response apparently ignored this suggestion, for Elmore wrote him (9 January 1844, cited above) to repeat it; you seem not to have understood me, Elmore wrote, I also urged you to mention Texas. Yet when Elmore reported, a few days later, on a consultation of Calhoun's friends about the "Address," he said not a word about Texas. See: Elmore to Calhoun, Charleston, 13 January 1844, in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 911-912. Without Calhoun's letters to Elmore it is impossible to be certain, but it appears that Calhoun refused, as he had earlier, to introduce

(continued)

6, continued:

the subject of annexation into a discussion of his own presidential candidacy and his grievances against the Van Buren wing of the Democratic party.

Calhoun's object was not to get himself elected President, but to protect the South and slavery and, thereby, the Union.

Compare: Garraty, Wright, 253-254; and Smith, Magnificent Missourian, 190-194. Smith argues that by the time Calhoun entered Tyler's Cabinet he had given up hope for the Presidency and was trying to split the Union. As authority for this wild assertion Smith cites Calhoun's letter of 4 December 1843 to George McDuffie, in Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 555. This letter was written when Calhoun expected to be an independent candidate for President and when he had not the slightest idea that he might ever enter Tyler's Cabinet. The contents of this letter are summarized on page 140, above.

7. Cave Johnson to Polk, Washington, 30 April 1844, Polk Papers, L. C.; Amos Kendall to Van Buren, Washington, 13 May 1844, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

8. This danger was particularly great if the annexationists concentrated on Cass, their most popular candidate, because James Buchanan and his friends in Pennsylvania were very angry at him and determined that he should not be nominated. See: Henry D. Gilpin to Van Buren, Philadelphia, 5 November 1843, ibid.; and Wright to Butler, Washington, 17 and 26 May 1844, Wright Papers, Pers. (Misc.) Coll., N. Y. Pub. Lib.

9. John Fairfield to his wife, Washington, 26 March 1844, in: Staples, ed., Fairfield Letters, 330; Jabez D. Hammond to Van Buren, Cherry Valley, N. Y., 7 April 1844, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

10. Wright to John L. Russell, Washington, 15 May 1844, in: Gillet, Life and Times of Wright, 2:1518; Henry Simpson to Van Buren, Philadelphia, 30 April 1844, Van Buren Papers, L. C.; and Flagg to O. Hungerford, Albany, 9 May 1844, Flagg Papers, N. Y. Pub. Lib.

See also: J. Gould to Van Buren, New York City, 13 April 1844; and George Bancroft to Van Buren, Boston, 2 May 1844; both in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.; and Cave Johnson to Polk, Washington, 3 May 1844, Polk Papers, L. C.

11. Flagg to O. Hungerford, Albany, 9 May 1844, Flagg Papers, N. Y. Pub. Lib.; Wright to Butler, Washington, 20 May 1844, Wright Papers, Pers. (Misc.) Coll., N. Y. Pub. Lib.

Van Buren, too, was resentful. On an anonymous letter informing him that the leading Virginia Democrats had decided to

(continued)

11, continued:

desert him ("Q in the Corner" to Van Buren, Petersburg, Va., 1 May 1844, Van Buren Papers, L. C.), Van Buren angrily scrawled the comment: "Desertion on the Texas, pro hac vice . . ." Pro hac vice means "for this occasion only;" the last word is illegible--it might be "test."

Wright was extremely bitter. Less than a week before the convention met he complained to a friend that "I have been so long in the midst of the rankest, foulest treason, as well as every form of falsehood, treachery, and deceit, that my very nature almost has been soured . . ." Wright to J. L. Russell, Washington, 22 May 1844, in: Gillet, Life and Times of Wright, 2:1519. To Butler Wright said that it would "require at least the force of a regular nomination" to make him vote for Cass, Johnson, or Woodbury. To Butler, Washington, 26 May 1844, Wright Papers, Pers. (Misc.) Coll., N. Y. Pub. Lib.

See also: Bancroft to Van Buren, Washington, 25 May 1844, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

12. John T. Sullivan to H. D. Gilpin, Washington, 16 May 1844, Political and Social Correspondence, Gilpin Papers, Hist. Soc. Pa.; O. Hungerford to Flagg, Washington, 6 May 1844; Preston King to Flagg, Washington, 7 May 1844; and J. L. Russell to Flagg, Canton, N. Y., 14 May 1844; all in the Flagg Papers, N. Y. Pub. Lib.

King did not go so far as to recommend Van Buren's withdrawal, but he came within one sentence of it.

13. Flagg to Hungerford, Albany, 9 May 1844, ibid.; Wright to Butler, Washington, 15 May 1844, Wright Papers, Pers. (Misc.) Coll., N. Y. Pub. Lib.; and Wright to J. L. Russell, Washington, 22 May 1844, in: Gillet, Life and Times of Wright, 2:1519.

14. "D/raft/ Letter to Mr. Butler," Lindenwald, 20 May 1844, in Van Buren's hand, Van Buren Papers, L. C. On Wright's stubborn refusal to become a presidential candidate, see page 191 below.

15. Chambers, Old Bullion Benton, 264-265; Woodford, Cass, 230-231; Sidney Breese to Van Buren, Clinton Co., Ill., 21 March 1843; P. H. Olmstead et al., Circular of the Oregon General Committee of Ohio, Cincinatti, 22 May 1843; John Wilson to Van Buren, Marietta, Ohio, 2 August 1843; and John Norvell to Van Buren, Detroit, 10 September 1843; all in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.

16. The reports and resolutions of both meetings, which were primarily concerned with defending Van Buren and advocating his renomination despite his reply to Hammett, are in the Columbus Ohio Statesman, extra issue of 22 May 1844, a copy of which is ibid.

17. /Van Buren/ to B. F. Brown and J. Newton, Jr., Albany, 28 October 1843, in Van Buren's hand, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

18. A. C. Dodge to Van Buren, Washington, 30 April 1844, two letters, one public, one private, ibid.

19. Wright to Van Buren, Washington, 20 May 1844, ibid.

20. Dawson to Van Buren, Cincinatti, 16 May 1844; Wm. H. Haywood to Van Buren, Washington, 6 May 1844, and Van Buren's endorsement thereon; both ibid.

See also: Amos Kendall to Van Buren, Washington, 16 May 1844, proposing that Van Buren announce that, if the Democratic platform endorsed annexation and if he was elected President on that platform, he would consider his election to be such a popular endorsement of annexation as he had mentioned in his reply to Hammet as a possible reason for his favoring annexation in the future. This letter is ibid.

21. The quotation is from Tilden to /Van Buren/, New York City, 4 May 1844, ibid.

On the leeway within the position(s) Van Buren had taken in his reply to Hammet, see: Wright to Van Buren, Washington, 6 May 1844; and Butler to Van Buren, New York City, 10 May 1844; both ibid.

22. Butler to Van Buren, Maysville, Ky., to Harrodsburg, Pa., 29 April to 4 May 1844, a continued letter, ibid.; and Wright to Butler, Washington, 15 May 1844, Wright Papers, Pers. (Misc.) Coll., N. Y. Pub. Lib.

23. The quoted phrases are from: Jackson to the editor of the Nashville, Tenn., Union, the Hermitage, 13 May 1844. A copy of this letter was enclosed, along with a personal letter to Van Buren from Jackson, written the same day, in: Andrew J. Donelson to Van Buren, Nashville, 14 May 1844, ibid.

On the same day Jackson wrote this letter to the Union he told James K. Polk that Van Buren was finished and that Polk should be the Democratic nominee to the Presidency. See: Polk to Cave Johnson, Nashville, 13 May 1844, in: St. George L. Sioussat, ed., "Letters of James K. Polk to Cave Johnson, 1833-1848," Tennessee Historical Magazine, 1(1915):239-240.

24. Wright to A. H. Tracy, Washington, 10 May 1844, Tracy Papers, N. Y. St. Lib.; Wright to Butler, Washington, 21 May 1844, Wright Papers, Pers. (Misc.) Coll., N. Y. Pub. Lib.; and Wright to Flagg, Washington, 23 May 1844; and George Bancroft to Van Buren, Washington, 23, 24, and 25 May /1844/; all in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.

25. Wright to Butler, Washington, 21 May 1844, Wright Papers, Pers. (Misc.) Coll., N. Y. Pub. Lib.; Flagg to Van Buren, Albany, 23 May 1844, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

On Dromgoole, see: Wm. H. Roane to Van Buren, Richmond, 11 September 1843, ibid.; and Cave Johnson to Polk, Washington, 7 January 1844, Polk Papers, L. C.

26. Wright to Flagg, Washington, 23 May 1844; and Bancroft to Van Buren, Washington, 23, 24, and 25 May /1844/; all in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.; Wright to Butler, Washington, 27 May 1844, Wright Papers, Pers. (Misc.) Coll., N. Y. Pub. Lib.; and Wright to Van Buren, Washington, 26 May 1844, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

27. Wright to Butler, Washington, 15, 24, and 27 May 1844, Wright Papers, Pers. (Misc.) Coll., N. Y. Pub. Lib.

28. Wright to Butler, Washington, 25 May 1844, ibid.; Butler to Van Buren, New York City, 23 May 1844, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

Nearly a year later Butler described the purpose of the Texas and Oregon plank in the Democratic platform, which he said was very similar to the one he had drawn up, as designed to unite all Democrats by advocating the "reannexation" of Texas and the "reoccupation" of Oregon in such a manner as to ascribe to both measures "the highest grade of nationality" and to avoid "the narrow, and to northern minds, at least, the very objectionable ground, on which the question of Texas had been placed by Mr. Tyler and his Secretaries." He further said that by urging the accomplishment of these measures "'at the earliest practicable period'" the authors of the platform sought to unite the advocates of immediate annexation with those who "felt that some fair and equitable division of the territory, between Slaveholding and non-Slaveholding states, was essential . . . to the quiet of the Country and the interests of its various parts, and consequently to the successful prosecution of the measure itself." Butler to Van Buren, n. p., 15 February 1845, the first of two drafts of this part of the letter, both drafts of which are in the Benjamin F. Butler Papers, New York State Library, Albany. Butler wrote this letter as part of a campaign to obtain the office of Secretary of State under President Polk, and probably with the intention that it be shown to Polk. It may not, therefore, reflect with perfect accuracy Butler's feelings just before the Baltimore convention.

However, it is very close in spirit to a remark made by Wright in his letter to Butler of 25 May 1844, cited above. Referring to his own draft of a Texas plank, he said "I confess to you, I rather like my Texas resolution, if our Northern friends can go for it . . ."

29. Cave Johnson to Polk, Washington, 16 and 25 May 1844, Polk Papers, L. C.

30. Wright to John Fine, Washington, 23 May 1844, in: Gillet, Life and Times of Wright, 2:1534-1537. Gillet was in Washington at the time this letter was written, and he took it with him to Baltimore: Fine to Flagg, Washington, 24 May 1844, Van Buren Papers, L. C. See also: Garraty, Wright, 263-267.

31. S. Croswell to "Cog," Baltimore, [26 May 1844]; Butler to Van Buren, [Baltimore], 7 a. m., 27 May 1844; and J. L. O'Sullivan to Van Buren, Reporter's Table, Egyptian Hall, Baltimore, 27 May 1844, (the first installment of a continued letter, written while the convention met, in which O'Sullivan gave Van Buren a running account of the proceedings); all in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.; and Cave Johnson to Polk, Washington, night, 27 May 1844, Polk Papers, L. C.

32. On the debate and on the vote on the rule, see: O'Sullivan to Van Buren, 27 and 28 May 1844, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

33. The opponents of Van Buren made no secret of the fact that this was why they voted for the two-thirds rule: Hendrick B. Wright to Polk, Wilkes-Barre, Pa., 12 June 1844, Polk Papers, L. C.

34. O'Sullivan to Van Buren, Baltimore, 28 May 1844, Van Buren Papers, L. C.; Gideon J. Pillow to Polk, Baltimore, 28 May 1844; and J. W. Blackwell to Polk, Baltimore, 28 May 1844; both in the Polk Papers, L. C.; and F. W. Pickens to Calhoun, Baltimore, [28 May 1844], P.S. 8:00 p. m., in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 960.

35. Pickens to Calhoun, ibid.; Pillow to Polk, Baltimore, 28 May 1844, Polk Papers, L. C.; and Allen McLane to Polk, Wilmington, Del., 31 May 1844, ibid.

36. On Polk's relations with Calhoun, see: Calhoun to Armistead Burt, Ft. Hill, 2 November 1840, in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 466; Polk to Calhoun, Columbia, Tenn., 23 February 1842, ibid., 844-845; and J. G. M. Ramsey to Polk, Mecklenburg, [near Knoxville, Tenn.], 31 May [1843], and 4 and 10 January 1844, all in the Polk Papers, L. C.

After his nomination, several Democrats reminded Polk that, as Fernando Wood of New York City put it, "one chief merit of the selection . . . is that you have been in no way identified with the struggle that has for some time been going on between the friends of the different candidates--yours has been a negative position . . ." Wood to Polk, New York City, 1 June [1844], ibid. See also: Cave Johnson to Polk, Washington, 1 and 10 June 1844; Jacob Thompson to Polk, Washington, 7 June 1844; and S. H. Laughlin to Polk, Nashville, 28 June 1844; all ibid.; Buchanan to Polk, Lancaster, Pa., 23 September and 4 November 1844, Letters and Drafts, Buchanan Papers, Hist. Soc. Pa.; and F. W. Pickens to Calhoun, Edgewood, S. C., 9 September 1844, in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 968-969.

(continued)

36, continued:

Polk had announced his support of both annexation of Texas and occupation of Oregon in letters to: S. P. Chase, Columbia, Tenn., 23 April 1844, draft, and to George Sanders et al., Columbia, Tenn., 25 April 1844, draft; both in the Polk Papers, L. C.

37. Aaron V. Brown to Mrs. James K. Polk, Washington, 14 January 1844; and Wm. L. D. Ewing to Polk, Springfield, Ill., 7 May 1844; both ibid.; Cave Johnson to Polk, Washington, 8 May 1844, reporting a conversation with Wright, ibid.; A. J. Donelson to Polk, Nashville, 10 May 1844; and S. H. Laughlin to Polk, Nashville, 10 May 1844; both ibid., urging Polk to come to Nashville and confer with Jackson about Polk's becoming a presidential candidate; Polk to Cave Johnson, Nashville, 13 May 1844, Nashville, 14 May 1844, and Columbia, 14/?/ May 1844, all in: Sioussat, ed., "Letters of Polk to Cave Johnson," Tenn. Hist. Mag., 1:239-240, 241-242, and 242-243. It was in this last letter that Polk named Pillow as his campaign manager.

Pillow, in letters to Polk from Washington, 24 and 25 May 1844, Polk Papers, L. C., spoke of Polk's presidential candidacy as though the idea had originated with him.

38. Pillow to Polk, Baltimore, 28 and 29 May 1844, and the second of two letters dated 30 May 1844; and Ira A. Eastman to Cave Johnson, Gilmanton, N. H., 10 August 1844; all ibid. Johnson sent Eastman's letter to Polk to read, which might imply endorsement of its accuracy. Cave Johnson to Polk, Clarksville, Tenn., 29 August 1844, ibid.

In a letter to Polk, 6 July 1844, which is in the Bancroft Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, and is summarized in Nye, Bancroft, 131-132, and in Smith, Annexation, 251, but the original of which I have not seen, Bancroft claimed to have originated the movement to nominate Polk. He may well have been the Massachusetts delegate Pillow said approached him with the idea at the adjournment of the convention Tuesday evening. Polk's appointment of Bancroft to his Cabinet is not necessarily a confirmation of Bancroft's claim, for Van Buren had strongly advocated Bancroft's inclusion in the Cabinet and Polk was alarmed at the prospect that Van Buren might oppose him because he had rejected so many of the Magician's suggestions: Van Buren to Polk, Lindenwald, 18 January 1845, /fair copy/; Polk to Van Buren, Washington, 22 February 1845; and Smith T. Van Buren to Van Buren, Washington, 3 March 1845; all in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.

Franklin Pierce backed up Bancroft's claim, but I do not know whether he spoke as an eye witness or not. He did refer to Cave Johnson as one who would corroborate his report of Bancroft's exertions in Polk's behalf: Pierce to Polk, Concord, N. H., 23 September 1844, Polk Papers, L. C.

(continued)

38, continued:

In any case, Bancroft's claim, some forty years later, to have been single-handedly responsible for Polk's nomination, is exaggerated to say the least: Bancroft to J. George Harris, Newport, R. I., 30 August 1887, Bancroft-Harris Correspondence, George Bancroft Papers, New York Public Library. For example, Bancroft claimed to have been the virtual dictator of the Massachusetts delegation, able to control its entire vote. In fact, the Massachusetts delegation divided its vote on every ballot in the convention except the last.

For other claims to the honor of having first thought of making Polk President, see: B. S. Davis to Polk, Washington, 30 May 1844, Polk Papers, L. C.; Benj. C. Howard to George M. Dallas, Wyoming, Md., 30 June 1844, G. M. Dallas Correspondence, A. J. and G. M. Dallas Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia; and J. Porter Brawley to Buchanan, Cincinatti, 20 December 1844, Misc. Corr., Buchanan Papers, Hist. Soc. Pa.

39. Butler to Van Buren, New York City, 31 May 1844; and O'Sullivan to Van Buren, Baltimore, 29 May 1844; both in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.

40. O'Sullivan to Van Buren, ibid.

41. Ibid.; and Butler to Van Buren, New York City, 31 May 1844, ibid.; and Granville S. Crockett to Polk, Baltimore, 2 p. m., /29/ May 1844; Gideon J. Pillow to Polk, Baltimore, 29 May 1844; and A. J. Donelson to Polk, Philadelphia, 31 May 1844; all in the Polk Papers, L. C.

Polk's endorsement on the first report he received of his nomination was: "Important if true." Kenedy Lonergan to Polk, Cincinatti, 2 June 1844, ibid.

42. See: Butler to Van Buren, New York, 31 May 1844, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

Butler and some other New Yorkers had shown a similar attitude even before the convention met: Edwin Croswell to Van Buren, New York, 24 May 1844, ibid., reporting that the New York delegation had decided "to stand by a majority vote in the Convention; but /they/ may yield possibly something conditionally on that point, if it were safe to do so, and other sections were pertinacious." Butler's efforts to devise a platform plank on Texas which would be satisfactory both to Van Buren and to the annexationists may have been motivated by a desire to hold the party together under Van Buren or by a desire simply to hold the party together. He told Van Buren a week before the convention that " . . . we are pledged to support the candidate of the Convention, and if the nomination is fairly made, as regards the action of the body apparent to public view, we must honestly fulfill this pledge, even

(continued)

**42, continued:**

though it should not be of the individuals we prefer." Butler to Van Buren, New York City, 20 May 1844, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

43. Bancroft to Van Buren, Washington, 24 and 25 May 1844, and 14 June 1844, all ibid.; and Henry Horn to Polk, Philadelphia, 30 May 1844; John Fairfield to Polk, Washington, 2 June 1844; Thomas P. Moore to Polk, Harrodsburg, Ky., 5 June 1844; Henry Hubbard to Polk, Charlestown, N. H., 17 June 1844; A. Beaumont to Polk, Wilkes Barre, Pa., 7 July 1844; and John Law to Polk, Vincennes, Ind., 12 July 1844; all in the Polk Papers, L. C.

44. On the purpose of the two-thirds rule, see: H. B. Wright to Polk, Wilkes Barre, Pa., 12 June 1844, ibid.; and C. J. Ingersoll to Van Buren, Philadelphia, 10 September 1844, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

Walker of Mississippi and John W. Tibbatts of Kentucky both protested against Young's claim that the two-thirds rule would prevent a nomination and against his assertion that no one had ever denied that it would have that effect: O'Sullivan to Van Buren, Baltimore, 29 May 1844, ibid. It should be added that, to my knowledge, no one but the Van Buren men ever made that charge against the two-thirds rule, although it was admitted by some other Democrats that its adoption might prevent a nomination. A Tennessee delegate argued that it was the only way to prevent disruption of the party, by blocking Van Buren's nomination, and that was its purpose with most delegates who voted for it: S. H. Laughlin to Polk, Washington, 23 May 1844, Polk Papers, L. C.

On the preference of the annexationists for a northern candidate, see: Cave Johnson to Polk, Washington, 3 May 1844; and B. G. Eastman to Polk, Knoxville, Tenn., 25 May 1844; both ibid.; Amos Kendall to Van Buren, Washington, 13 May 1844, mentioning General Henry Dodge of Wisconsin as another possible northern annexationist candidate; George Bancroft to Van Buren, Washington, 25 May [1844]; both in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.; and Henry K. Smith to A. H. Tracy, Baltimore, 25 May 1844, Tracy Papers, N. Y. St. Lib.

The only candidates seriously discussed as alternatives to Van Buren who were not Northerners were Johnson of Kentucky and Polk of Tennessee, neither of whom was strictly a Southerner.

On the talk of nominating Jackson, see: Auguste Davezac to Van Buren, Baltimore, 27 May 1844, reporting that the Virginians had suggested it; and O'Sullivan to Van Buren, Baltimore, 28 May 1844, 3:30 p. m., who reported that a Pennsylvania delegate actually nominated Jackson but was ruled out of order; both in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.

45. Calhoun to Mrs. T. G. Clemson /his daughter/, Washington, 10 May 1844, from which the quoted phrases are taken; and to Francis Wharton, Washington, 28 May 1844; both in: Jameson, ed., Corr. of Calhoun, 585-586 and 592-593.

On Calhoun's support of Polk, see: Wiltse, Calhoun: Sectionalist, 182 and 185.

46. O'Sullivan to Van Buren, Baltimore, 3:30 p. m., 29 May 1844; and Butler to Van Buren, New York City, 31 May 1844, from which the quotation is taken; both in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.

47. Wright to Butler, Washington, 29 May 1844, two letters of declination, one brief, the other long, and a private letter enclosing them; and Wright to Butler, Washington, 3 June 1844; all in the Wright Papers, Pers. (Misc.) Coll., N. Y. Pub. Lib.; Wright to Van Buren, Washington, 2 and 10 June 1844, Van Buren Papers, L. C.; Wright to Polk, Washington, 2 June 1844, Polk Papers, L. C.; Wright to A. H. Tracy, Washington, 6 June 1844, Tracy Papers, N. Y. St. Lib.; Wright to Flagg, Washington, 8 June 1844, Flagg Papers, N. Y. Pub. Lib.; and Wright to John L. Russell, Washington, 17 June 1844, in: Gillet, Life and Times of Wright, 2:1520-1521.

48. Wright to Polk, Washington, 2 June 1844, Polk Papers, L. C.

Notes to Chapter IX

1. Niles to Gideon Welles, Washington, 24 February 1845, Gideon Welles Papers, Personal Collection, New York Public Library.

2. Herbert D. A. Donovan, The Barnburners; A Study of the Internal Movements in the Political History of New York State . . . 1830-1852 (New York, 1925); Roy Franklin Nichols, The Democratic Machine, 1850-1854 (New York, 1923), Franklin Pierce, Young Hickory of the Granite Hills (Philadelphia, 19310, and The Disruption of American Democracy (New York, 1948).

3. On Bancroft, see: Nye, Bancroft, 134-180, especially 176-177; on Johnson, see: the Van Buren Papers, L. C., for the almost total lack of letters from him after early 1845; on the southern Crawford men, see the following letters, ibid.: J. Bragg to Van Buren, Mobile, 10 March 1847; Peter V. Daniel to Van Buren, Richmond, 1 and 19 November 1847; and Joseph G. Pickett to Van Buren, Carthage, Tenn., 16 November 1847; and also: Alfred Balch to Buchanan, Nashville, 5 May 1848; and George W. Gayle to Buchanan, Montgomery, Ala., 16 February 1848; both in: Misc. Corr., Buchanan Papers, Hist. Soc. Pa.; on the Philadelphians, see: G. W. Barton to Buchanan, Philadelphia, 29 December 1844; and George F. Lehman to Buchanan, Philadelphia, 30 April 1845; both ibid.; and also John M. Read to Buchanan, Philadelphia, 24 May 1845, John M. Read Letters, ibid.; on Blair, see: Smith, Blair Family, 1:172-183, 191-195, 204-206; on Benton, see: Chambers, Old Bullion Benton, 283-287, 313-354, 368-373, and 374-377.

4. Garraty, Wright, 292-305; Wright to Van Buren, Canton, N. Y., 8 October 1844, Albany, 30 January 1845, Albany, 17 March 1846, and Albany, 10 November 1846, all in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.; Wright to Flagg, Canton, 8 July and 23 August 1847, Flagg Papers, N. Y. Pub. Lib.; and Dix to Van Buren, Washington, 30 January 1845, 27 March 1846, 1 August 1846, and 27 January 1848, all in the Van Buren Papers, L. C.

5. John Van Buren to Van Buren, n. p., 30 April 1848, ibid., is a typical expression of the younger Van Buren's feelings.

6. For examples of Van Buren's unsuccessful efforts to restrain the Barnburners, see: Van Buren to Flagg, Lindenwald, 12 October 1847, a draft; and Van Buren to John Van Buren, Lindenwald, 3 May 1848, filed at the end of Vol. 54; both in the Van Buren Papers, L. C. In the latter, Van Buren congratulated John on the success of his "more temperate speeches" and warned him against any "rash and unadvised step which would give the Democracy of the other free states reason to assume that you were indifferent to the general success of the party--that you moved this great subject for private and personal piques . . ."

7. Van Buren to John VanBuren, Lindenwald, 3 May 1848, ibid.;
(continued)

**7, continued:**

Van Buren to John A. Dix, Stuyvesant, /N. Y./, 20 June 1848, John A. Dix Papers, Columbia University Library, New York City, also in: Morgan Dix, comp., Memoirs of John Adams Dix (2 vols., New York, 1883), 1:234; and Van Buren to Dix, Lindenwald, 14 July 1848, Dix Papers, Col. Univ. Lib.; Nichols, Democratic Machine, 22.

8. The point is clearly shown by the instructions for the New York Barnburner delegations to the 1848 convention which Martin Van Buren drew up for his son John. If the convention refused to admit them, or proposed to admit both them and the Hunker delegation from New York (which is what it did do), Van Buren advised that the Barnburners should have nothing further to do with the convention and should issue an address to the people of New York charging that they had been denied equality with the delegations from other states "distinctly upon the ground of their opposition to the extension of slavery to free territories . . ." Van Buren to John Van Buren, Lindenwald, 3 May 1848, filed at the end of Vol. 54, Van Buren Papers, L. C.

The other extreme in 1848 was represented by William L. Yancey, who introduced in the Alabama state Democratic convention in February, 1848, resolutions insisting that the Democratic party of Alabama would support no candidate for President or Vice President who believed that the people of a territory could prohibit slavery in that territory before it became a state. The resolutions further stated that the Democratic party should be co-extensive with the Union, but that Alabama Democrats would recognize no man as a Democrat who attempted to "denationalize the South and its institutions, by restrictions on its citizens and on those institutions, calculated to array one section . . . against the other . . . " Such attempts were treason, not only to the perpetuity of the Union, but to "party faith." Yancey to Buchanan, Montgomery, Alabama, 2 May 1848, enclosing a newspaper clipping containing his resolutions, Misc. Corr., Buchanan Papers, Hist. Soc. Pa.

On the breakup of the Democratic party at Baltimore in 1860, see: Nichols, Disruption, 219-227, 230-231, 249-256, 281-284, 288-320, and 321-322.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Manuscript Materials

Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library, Detroit, Michigan:

Bagg, John S., Papers
Cass, Lewis, Papers
Felch, Alpheus, Papers
McClelland, Robert, Papers
Sheldon, John P., Papers
Wilkins, Ross, Papers

Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois:

Calhoun, John C., Collection
Polk, James K., Collection
Porter, George B., Collection
Van Buren, Martin, Collection
Williams, Thomas H., Collection
Wright, Silas, Collection

Columbia University Libraries, New York City, New York:

Dix, John A., Papers (used by the courtesy of Mrs. John A. Dix, III)
Flagg, Azariah C., Papers

Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania:

Bigler, William, Papers
Buchanan, James, Papers, including:
Letters and Drafts
Miscellaneous Correspondence
Jeremiah S. Black Letters
Benjamin H. Brewster Letters
Simon Cameron Letters
John M. Read Letters
William B. Reed Letters
John W. Forney Letters

Coryell, Lewis S., Correspondence
Dallas, Alexander J. and George M., Papers
Gilpin, Henry D., Papers
Lewis, Ellis, Papers
Pemberton, John P., Papers
Poinsett, Joel R., Letters in the Henry D. Gilpin Collection
Porter, David R., Correspondence in the W. W. Porter Papers

Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois:

Douglas, Stephen A., Letters
French, Augustus C., Papers
Lanphier, Charles H., Papers
McClernand, John A., Papers

Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.:

Polk, James K., Papers
Van Buren, Martin, Papers

Michigan Historical Collection, Ann Arbor, Michigan:

Felch, Alpheus, Papers

Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis, Missouri:

Benton, Thomas Hart, Collection
Treat, Judge Samuel, Papers

New York Historical Society, New York City, New York:

Bancroft, George, Papers
Buchanan, James, Papers
Calhoun, John C., Papers
Cass, Lewis, Papers
Hammond, Jabez D., Papers
Johnson, Andrew, Papers
Lewis, Dixon H., Papers
McDuffie, George, Papers
Polk, James K., Papers
Schuyler, Philip, Papers
Van Buren, Martin, Papers
Walker, Robert J., Papers
Wright, Silas, Papers

New York Public Library, New York City, New York:

Bancroft, George, Papers
Bancroft-Harris Correspondence
Barbour, James, Papers
Bryant-Godwin Collection
Flagg, Azariah C., Papers
Lewis, William B., and Andrew Jackson Letters
Niles, John M., Papers in the Personal (Miscellaneous) Collection
Read, John M., Letters in the Meredith-Clymer-Read Collection
Tilden, Samuel J., Papers
Van Buren, Martin, Papers in the Presidential Papers Collection
Welles, Gideon, Papers in the Personal Collection
Wright, Silas, Papers in the Personal (Miscellaneous) Collection

New York State Library, Albany, New York:

Benton, Nathaniel S., Correspondence
Butler, Benjamin F., Papers
Townsend, John, Correspondence
Tracy, Albert H., Papers
Van Buren, Martin, Papers

Ohio Historical Society Library, Columbus, Ohio:

Larwill, Joseph and John, Papers
Medary, Samuel, Papers
Thurman, Allen G., Papers

State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin:

Tallmadge, Nathaniel P., Papers (microfilm of originals in the possession of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Boardman, Oshkosh, Wisconsin)

Harper Memorial Library, University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois:

Douglas, Stephen Arnold, Papers

William L. Clements Library, Ann Arbor, Michigan:

Cass, Lewis, Papers
Lyon, Lucius, Papers

## Published Letters and Papers

Ambler, Charles H., ed. Correspondence of Robert M. T. Hunter, 1826-1876. Volume 2 of American Historical Association Annual Report, 1916. Washington, 1918.

Bassett, John Spencer, ed. Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. 7 vols., Washington, 1926-1935.

Blackburn, Glen A., comp., and Nellie Armstrong Robertson and Dorothy Riker, eds. The John Tipton Papers. 3 vols., Indianapolis, 1942. Also published as Vols. 24-26 of the Indiana Historical Collections.

Boucher, Chauncey S., and Robert P. Brooks, eds. Correspondence Addressed to John C. Calhoun, 1837-1849. Volume 2 of American Historical Association Annual Report, 1929. Washington, 1930.

Boyd, William K., ed. "Selections from the Correspondence of Bedford Brown." Trinity College Historical Society Historical Papers, 6(1906):66-92.

Colton, Calvin, ed. The Life, Correspondence, and Speeches of Henry Clay. 6 vols., New York, 1857.

Cox, Isaac J., ed. "Letters of William T. Barry, 1796-1801, 1829-1831." American Historical Review, 16(1910-1911):327-336.

Cox, Isaac J., ed. "Selections from the Torrence Papers." Quarterly Publication of the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio, 1(1906):63-96, 2(1907):1-36, and 6(1911):45-88.

"Dix Letters, 1812-1848." Massachusetts Historical Society Proceedings, 50(1917):133-168.

Dix, Morgan, comp. Memoirs of John Adams Dix. 2 vols., New York, 1883.

Hamilton, Luther, ed. Memoirs, Speeches, and Writings of Robert Rantoul, Jr. Boston, 1854.

Hamlin, L. Belle, arr. and ed. "Selections from the Follett Papers." Quarterly Publication of the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio, 9(1914):69-100, 10(1915):1-33, and 11(1916):1-34.

Jameson, J. Franklin, ed. Correspondence of John C. Calhoun. Volume 2 of American Historical Association Annual Report, 1899. Washington, 1900.

McGrane, Reginald C., ed. Correspondence of Nicholas Biddle Dealing with National Affairs, 1807-1844. Boston, 1919.

Mackenzie, William L., The Lives and Opinions of Benj'n Franklin Butler . . . and Jesse Hoyt . . . Boston, 1845.

Mackenzie, William L., The Life and Times of Martin Van Buren. Boston, 1846.

McPherson, Elizabeth G., ed. "Unpublished Letters of North Carolinians to Andrew Jackson." North Carolina Historical Review, 14(1937):361-392.

McPherson, Elizabeth G., ed. "Unpublished Letters from North Carolinians to Polk." North Carolina Historical Review, 16(1939):54-79, 174-200, 328-357, and 428-457, and 17(1940): 37-66, 139-166, and 249-266.

McPherson, Elizabeth G., ed. "Unpublished Letters from North Carolinians to Van Buren." North Carolina Historical Review, 15(1938):53-81 and 131-155.

Moore, Frederick W., ed. "Calhoun as Seen by His Political Friends: Letters of Duff Green, Dixon H. Lewis and Richard K. Crallé during the Period from 1831 to 1848." Publications of the Southern History Association, 7(1903):159-169, 269-291, 353-361, and 419-426.

"Original Letters [to Thomas W. Gilmer]." William and Mary Quarterly, 20(1911-1912):1-10 and 114-123.

"Ritchie Letters." The John P. Branch Historical Papers of Randolph-Macon College 3(1909-1912):199-252 and 354-357, and 4(1913-1916):372-418.

Rowland, Dunbar, ed. Jefferson Davis, Constitutionalist: His Letters, Papers and Speeches. 10 vols., Jackson, Mississippi, 1923.

Rowland, Kate Mason, contributer. "Letters of Hon. Stevens Thomson Mason." William and Mary Quarterly, 17(1908-1909):33-34.

Rowland, Kate Mason, contributer. "William T. Barry Letters." William and Mary Quarterly, 13(1904-1905):107-116 and 236-244, and 14(1905-1906):19-23 and 230-241.

Schauinger, J. Herman, ed. "The Letters of Godlove S. Orth, Hoosier Whig." The Indiana Magazine of History, 39(1943): 365-397.

Sedgwick, Theodore, Jr., ed. A Collection of the Political Writings of William Leggett. 2 vols., New York, 1840.

Severance, Frank H., ed. Millard Fillmore Papers. Volumes 10-11 of Publications of the Buffalo Historical Society. Buffalo, New York, 1907.

Shanks, Henry Thomas, ed. The Papers of Willie Person Mangum. 5 vols., Raleigh, N.C., 1950-1956.

Sioussat, St. George L., ed. "Letters of James K. Polk to Cave Johnson, 1833-1848." Tennessee Historical Magazine, 1(1915): 209-257.

Sioussat, St. George L., ed. "Letters to Andrew J. Donelson, 1843-1848." Tennessee Historical Magazine, 3(1917):51-73.

Staples, Arthur G., ed. The Letters of John Fairfield. Lewiston, Maine, 1922.

Tucker, Nathaniel Beverley. "Correspondence of Judge Tucker." William and Mary Quarterly, 12(1903-1904):84-95 and 142-155.

Tyler, John. "Correspondence of President Tyler." William and Mary Quarterly, 12(1903-1904):139-141 and 13(1904-1905):1-3.

Tyler, Julia Gardiner, ed. "Letters from Tyler Trunks." Tyler's Quarterly Historical and Genealogical Magazine, 18(1886-1887): 8-31, 88-97, and 141-163

Tyler, Lyon G., ed. The Letters and Times of the Tylers. 2 vols., Richmond, 1885.

"Van Buren-Bancroft Correspondence, 1830-1845." Massachusetts Historical Society, Proceedings, 42(1909):391-413.

Van Buren, Martin. Mr. Van Buren's Reply to the Democratic State Convention of Indiana. Kinderhook, February 15, 1843.

Washburne, E. B., ed. The Edwards Papers . . . Volume 3 of the Chicago Historical Society's Collections. Chicago, 1914.

Biographies and Autobiographies

Alexander, Holmes. The American Talleyrand: The Career and Contemporaries of Martin Van Buren, Eighth President. New York and London, 1935.

Ambler, Charles H. Thomas Ritchie: A Study in Virginia Politics. Richmond, 1913.

Bassett, John Spencer. The Life of Andrew Jackson. New ed., 2 vols. in 1, New York, 1928.

Butler, William A. A Retrospect of Forty Years, 1825-1865. Edited by Harriet Allen Butler. New York, 1911.

Capers, Henry D. The Life and Times of C. G. Memminger. Richmond, 1893.

Chambers, William Nisbet. Old Bullion Benton: Senator from the New West. Boston, c1956.

Chitwood, Oliver Perry. John Tyler: Champion of the Old South. New York, c1939.

Curtis, George Ticknor. Life of James Buchanan, Fifteenth President of the United States. 2 vols., New York, 1883.

Dodd, William E. Robert J. Walker, Imperialist. Chicago, 1914.

Horn, Helen P. "Samuel Medary--Journalist and Politician, 1801-1864." Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Quarterly, 53(1944):14-38.

Du Bose, John Witherspoon. The Life and Times of William Lowndes Yancey: A History of Political Parties in the United States, from 1834 to 1864, Especially as to the Origin of the Confederate States. 2 vols., New York, 1942, c1892.

Flick, Alexander Clarence, and Gustav S. Lobrano. Samuel Jones Tilden: A Study in Political Sagacity. New York, 1939.

Garraty, John Arthur. Silas Wright. New York, 1949.

Garrett, William. Reminiscences of Public Men in Alabama, for Thirty Years. Atlanta, Ga., 1872.

Gillet, Ransom H. The Life and Times of Silas Wright. 2 vols. paginated continuously, Albany, 1874.

Godwin, Parke. A Biography of William Cullen Bryant with Extracts from His Private Correspondence. 2 vols., New York, 1883.

Gordon, Armistead C. William Fitzhugh Gordon, a Virginian of the Old School: His Life, Times and Contemporaries (1787-1858). New York and Washington, 1909.

Govan, Thomas Payne. Nicholas Biddle, Nationalist and Public Banker: 1786-1844. Chicago, 1959.

Jordan, H. Donaldson. "A Politician of Expansion: Robert J. Walker." Mississippi Valley Historical Review, 19(1932):362-381.

July, Robert W. The Essential New Yorker: Gulian Crommelin Verplanck. Durham, N. C., 1951.

Johnson, Allen, and Dumas Malone et al., eds. Dictionary of American Biography. 20 vols. and supplements, New York, 1928- .

Kendall, Amos. Autobiography of Amos Kendall. Edited by William Stickney. New York, 1949, c1872.

Kibler, Lillian Adele. Benjamin F. Perry: South Carolina Unionist. Durham, N. C., 1946.

Klein, Philip Shriver. President James Buchanan: A Biography. University Park, Pa., c1962.

Lynch, Denis Tilden. An Epoch and a Man: Martin Van Buren and His Times. New York, 1929.

McCormac, Eugene I. James K. Polk: A Political Biography. New York, 1905.

McGrane, Reginald Charles. William Allen: A Study in Western Democracy. Columbus, O., c1925.

Merritt, Elizabeth. James Henry Hammond. Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science, Volume 41, Number 4. Baltimore, 1933.

Meyer, Leland W. Life and Times of Col. Richard M. Johnson of Kentucky. New York, 1932.

Mitchell, Stewart. Horatio Seymour of New York. Cambridge, Mass., 1938.

Moore, Powell. "James K. Polk, Tennessee Politician." Journal of Southern History, 17(1951):493-516.

Morrel, Martha McBride. "Young Hickory:" The Life and Times of James K. Polk. New York, 1949.

Nichols, Roy Franklin. Franklin Pierce: Young Hickory of the Granite Hills. Philadelphia, 1931.

Nye, Russell B. George Bancroft: Brahmin Rebel. New York, 1944.

Parish, John C. Robert Lucas. Iowa City, 1907.

Parks, Joseph H. Felix Grundy: Champion of Democracy. University, La., 1940.

Putnam, Herbert Everett. Joel Roberts Poinsett: A Political Biography. Washington, D. C., 1935.

Ranck, James Byrne. Albert Gallatin Brown: Radical Southern Nationalist. New York and London, c1937.

Schurz, Carl. Life of Henry Clay. 2 vols., Boston, 1888.

Sellers, Charles Grier, Jr. James K. Polk: Jacksonian, 1795-1843. Princeton, N. J., 1957.

Shenton, James P. Robert John Walker: A Politician from Jackson to Lincoln. New York and London, 1961.

Simms, Henry Harrison. Life of Robert M. T. Hunter. Richmond, 1935.

Smith, Elbert B. Magnificent Missourian: The Life and Times of Thomas Hart Benton. Philadelphia and New York, 1958.

Smith, William Ernest. The Francis Preston Blair Family in Politics. New York, 1933, 2 vols.

[Benton, Thomas Hart]. Thirty Years' View; or, A History of the Working of the American Government . . . from 1820 to 1850 . . . 2 vols., New York, 1856.

Brewer, W. Alabama: Her History, Resources, War Record, and Public Men: from 1540 to 1872. Montgomery, 1872.

Buley, R. Carlyle. The Old Northwest: Pioneer Period, 1815-1840. 2 vols., Indianapolis, 1950.

Craven, Avery Odell. "The 1840's and the Democratic Process." Journal of Southern History, 16(1950):161-176.

Cunningham, Noble E., Jr. The Jeffersonian Republicans: The Formation of Party Organization, 1789-1801. Chapel Hill, N. C., c1957.

Dallinger, Frederick W. Nominations for Elective Offices in the United States. New York, 1897.

Darling, Arthur B. Political Changes in Massachusetts, 1828-1848: A Study of Liberal Movements in Politics. New Haven, Conn., 1925.

Donovan, Herbert D. A. The Barnburners: A Study of the Internal Movements in the Political History of New York State and of the Resulting Changes in Political Affiliation, 1830-1852. New York, 1925.

Erikson, Erik McKinley. "The Federal Civil Service under President Jackson." Mississippi Valley Historical Review, 13(1926-1927):517-540.

Fish, Carl Russell. The Civil Service and the Patronage. Cambridge, Mass., and London, c1904.

Fitzsimmons, Matthew A. "Calhoun's Bid for the Presidency, 1841-1844." Mississippi Valley Historical Review, 38(1951-1952): 39-60.

Folmsbee, Stanley John. Sectionalism and Internal Improvements in Tennessee, 1796-1845. Philadelphia, 1939.

Ford, Thomas. A History of Illinois from Its Commencement as a State in 1818 to 1847 . . . Chicago and New York, 1854.

Gouge, William M. A Short History of Paper Money and Banking in the United States. Philadelphia, 1833.

Gunderson, Robert Gray. The Log-Cabin Campaign. Lexington, Ky., 1957.

Hamilton, James G. de Roulhac. "Party Politics in North Carolina, 1835-1860." James Sprunt Historical Publications, volume 15, numbers 1 and 2. Durham, N. C., 1916.

Hammond, Bray. Banks and Politics in America from the Revolution to the Civil War. Princeton, N. J., 1957.

Hammond, Jabez D. The History of Political Parties in the State of New York, from the Ratification of the Federal Constitution to December, 1840. 2 vols., 4th ed., corrected and enlarged, Syracuse, N. Y., 1852.

Hammond, Jabez D. Political History of the State of New York, from Jan. 1, 1841, to Jan. 1, 1847. Vol. III. Including the Life of Silas Wright. Syracuse and New York, 1852, c1848.

Hatch, Louis Clinton, ed. Maine, A History. 5 vols., New York, 1919.

Holt, Edgar Allen. Party Politics in Ohio, 1840-1850. Columbus, O., 1931.

Hubbart, Henry Clyde. The Older Middle West, 1840-1880: Its Social, Economic and Political Life and Sectional Tendencies before, during and after the Civil War. New York and London, c1936.

Huntington, Charles Clifford. A History of Banking and Currency in Ohio before the Civil War. Columbus, O., 1915.

Klein, Philip Shriver. Pennsylvania Politics, 1817-1832: A Game without Rules. Philadelphia, 1940.

Kohlmeier, A. L. The Old Northwest as the Keystone of the Arch of American Federal Union. Bloomington, Ind., 1938.

Lambert, Oscar Doane. Presidential Politics in the United States, 1841-1844. Durham, N. C., 1936.

Lander, Ernest M., Jr. "The Calhoun-Preston Feud, 1836-1842." South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine, 59(1958): 24-37.

Leonard, Adam A. "Personal Politics in Indiana, 1816-1840." Indiana Magazine of History, 19(1923):1-56, 132-168, and 241-281.

Livermore, Shaw, Jr. The Twilight of Federalism: The Disintegration of the Federalist Party, 1815-1830. Princeton, N. J., 1962.

Leutscher, George D. Early Political Machinery in the United States. Philadelphia, 1903.

McGrane, Reginald C. The Panic of 1837: Some Financial Problems of the Jacksonian Era. Chicago, 1924.

Meyers, Marvin. The Jacksonian Persuasion: Politics and Belief. Stanford, Cal., 1957.

Moore, Albert Burton. History of Alabama. University, Ala., c1934.

Mowry, Arthur May. The Dorr War; or, the Constitutional Struggle in Rhode Island. Providence, 1901.

Mueller, Henry R. The Whig Party in Pennsylvania. New York, 1922.

Nichols, Roy Franklin. The Democratic Machine, 1850-1854. New York, 1923.

Nichols, Roy Franklin. The Disruption of American Democracy. New York, 1948.

Ostrogorski, M. Democracy and the Organization of Political Parties. Trans. by Frederick Clarke. 2 vols., New York, 1922.

Paul, James C. N. Rift in the Democracy. Philadelphia, 1951.

Pease, Theodore Calvin. The Frontier State, 1818-1848. Volume 2 of The Centennial History of Illinois, edited by C. W. Alvord, 6 vols., Springfield, 1917-1920. Springfield, Ill., 1918.

Phillips, Ulrich Bonnell. Georgia and State Rights; A Study of the Political History of Georgia from the Revolution to the Civil War, with Particular Regard to Federal Relations. Volume 2 of American Historical Association Annual Report, 1901. Washington, 1902.

Pillsbury, Hobart. New Hampshire: Resources, Attractions, and Its People; A History. 5 vols., New York, 1927.

Primm, James Neal. Economic Policy in the Development of a Western State: Missouri, 1820-1860. Cambridge, Mass., 1954.

Remini, Robert V. "The Albany Regency." New York History, 39(1958): 341-355.

Remini, Robert V. Martin Van Buren and the Making of the Democratic Party. New York, 1959.

Rives, George Lockhart. The United States and Mexico, 1821-1848: A History of the Relations between the Two Countries from the Independence of Mexico to the Close of the War with the United States. 2 vols., New York, 1913.

Robinson, W. A. Jeffersonian Democracy in New England. New Haven, 1916.

Russell, Robert R. Economic Aspects of Southern Sectionalism, 1840-1861. Urbana, Ill., 1924.

Schlesinger, Arthur M., Jr. The Age of Jackson. New York, 1945.

Shaw, Archer H. 1842-1942: The Plain Dealer: One Hundred Years in Cleveland. New York, 1942.

Simms, Henry H. The Rise of the Whigs in Virginia, 1824-1840. Richmond, 1929.

Smith, Justin H. The Annexation of Texas. Corr. ed., New York, 1941.

Smith, Theodore Clarke. The Liberty and Free Soil Parties in the Northwest. Cambridge, Mass., c1897.

Snyder, Charles McCool. The Jacksonian Heritage: Pennsylvania Politics, 1833-1848. Harrisburg, 1958.

Stanwood, Edward. A History of the Presidency. 2 vols., Boston and New York, c1924.

Sydnor, Charles S. The Development of Southern Sectionalism, 1819-1848. Volume 5 of A History of the South, ed. by Wendell Holmes Stephenson and E. Merton Coulter, 10 vols. projected, Baton Rouge, 1947- . Baton Rouge, 1948.

Thomas, David Y., ed. Arkansas and Its People: A History, 1541-1930. 4 vols., New York, 1930.

Van Bolt, Roger H. "The Hoosier Politician of the 1840's." Indiana Magazine of History, 48(1952):23-36.

Van Bolt, Roger H. "Sectional Aspects of Expansion, 1844-1848." Indiana Magazine of History, 48(1952):119-140.

Van Buren, Martin. Inquiry into the Origin and Course of Political Parties in the United States. New York, 1867.

Van Deusen, Glyndon G. The Jacksonian Era, 1828-1848. New York, c1959.

Van Deusen, John G. Economic Bases of Disunion in South Carolina. New York, 1928.

Webster, Homer J. "History of the Democratic Party Organization in the Northwest, 1824-1840." Ohio Archaeological and Historical Quarterly, 24(1915):1-120.

Weisenburger, Francis P. The Passing of the Frontier, 1825-1850. Volume 3 of The State of Ohio, ed. by Carl Wittke, 6 vols., Columbus, O., 1941-1944. Columbus, O., 1941.

White, Leonard D. The Jacksonians: A Study in Administrative History, 1829-1861. New York, 1954.

Newspapers

Charleston, South Carolina, Courier, 1840.

Congressional Globe, Washington, D. C., 1837-1844, 25th-28th Congresses.

Niles Register (title varies), Philadelphia, 1840-1844.

Washington Globe, 1837-1844.

Government Documents

Illinois, House of Representatives, Journal, 1839-1844.

Illinois, Senate, Journal, 1839-1844.

Illinois, Senate and House of Representatives, Reports, 1839-1844.

Maine, Bank Commissioner, Report, January , 1840. House Document #7, 20th Maine Legislature.

Fairfield, John, Message of Governor John Fairfield . . . to the Legislature of the State of Maine, January, 1840. Augusta, 1840.

New York, Assembly, Documents, 1837. 4 vols.

New York, Senate, Documents, 1837. 3 vols.

South Carolina, House of Representatives, Journal, 1840-1844.

South Carolina, Senate, Journal, 1840-1844.

South Carolina, General Assembly, Reports and Resolutions, 1840-1844.

United States, Congress. Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1774-1949, . . . , Washington, 1950.

United States, Official Register (title varies), 1827-1843.

Richardson, James D., comp. A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1897. 1st ed., 10 vols., Washington, 1896-1899.

Dunbar, Charles F., comp. Laws of the United States Relating to Currency, Finance, and Banking, from 1789 to 1891. Boston, 1891.

TITLE OF THESIS MARTIN VAN BUREN AND THE RE-ORGANIZATION OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY, 1841-1844

Full Name GORDON ELLIOTT PARKS

Place and Date of Birth INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA, FEB. 25, 1929

Elementary and Secondary Education P.S. #82, INDIANAPOLIS, IND.; BADEN SCHOOL, ST. LOUIS, MO.; JENNINGS HIGH SCHOOL, JENNINGS, MO.

Colleges and Universities: Years attended and degrees UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI, 1946-1951, 1953-1954, A.B. & A.M.

Membership in Learned or Honorary Societies PHI BETA KAPPA, ALPHA PHI ZETA, OMICRON DELTA KAPPA

Publications "THREE YEARS WITH GRANT AS RECALLED BY WAR CORRESPONDENT SYLVANUS CADWALLADER: AN APPRAISAL," WISCONSIN MAG. OF HISTORY, 40:50-56

Major Department HISTORY

Minor(s) HISTORICAL AGENCIES

Date December 14, 1964

Signed Irvin D. Wyllie (for W. B. Hesseltine, deceased)
Professor in charge of thesis